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THE INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT.

BY MAJOR ARTHUR GRIFFITHS.

THE Intelligence Division of the War Office is an affiliated but locally distinct branch having no abiding place in that labyrinth of dark staircases and blind passages situated on the south side of Pall Mall, which is still as difficult to perambulate as when Charles Gordon refused to remain there, saying it was easier to find his way about Central Africa. The 'Intelligence,' as it is commonly called, has always had its own separate home; first in Spring Gardens, then in Adair House until that building was swallowed up by the extension of the Junior Carlton Club. Now it is lodged in a lofty and commodious mansion in Queen Anne's Gate, the other side of St. James's Park, none too big for the archives and masses of material knowledge it has now accumulated.

Its presses are filled to overflowing; the matter too is admirably tabulated and indexed, and reports on any reasonable, not too recondite subject are almost immediately available for the use of those entitled to ask for them. This means much more than the War Office—all the public departments, Foreign Office and Colonial Office included, draw upon the Military Intelligence; the Admiralty has its own machinery for collecting information, but it is also in touch with Queen Anne's Gate. Alone among War Office branches the Intelligence is entitled to correspond direct with the various departments. In addition to the stores of papers and documents filed for reference, the Intelligence is provided with a very well chosen and fairly comprehensive library, and access to the shelves is cordially extended to all who seek special information.

Before passing on to speak in detail of the important and useful work done by a department which has been of inestimable service—and this can be fully proved, present grumbling notwithstanding—it will be well to describe the personnel of the office. It consists of a chief or Director, an Assistant Adjutant-General as second in command, six Deputy Assistant Adjutant-Generals, six staff-captains, and a small number of clerks, the whole theory of the establishment being that the work should as far as possible be conducted by officers of responsible rank and position.

The Director has always been an officer of mark, and among those who have held the post may be mentioned Sir Archibald Alison, Sir Patrick MacDougall, Colonel Cameron, Sir Henry Brackenbury, at present Director-General of Ordnance, Sir William Chapman, now commanding the forces in Scotland, who was Lord Roberts's right-hand man in the Afghan campaigns, and especially in the notable march from Cabul to Candahar. The present Director is Sir John Ardagh, who is perhaps the best equipped for the control of the department of any who have exercised it. Two or three faculties which he possesses to a marked degree especially qualify him; one is indefatigable energy, another great powers of concentration on the subject in hand, a third is a marvellously retentive memory. He surprised everyone when he returned to the office, in which years ago he occupied a subordinate place, by the accuracy and fulness of his knowledge of all that had gone before. He could tell at a moment's glance when and how a subject had been raised and how decided, could often point to the very pigeon-hole where it was 'P. A,' or 'put away,' and this without any reference to index or notes. Sir John Ardagh is a member of one of the scientific corps, a Royal Engineer, who has seen much and varied service and devoted much thought to the military problems of the day.

The business of the Intelligence Department is entrusted to several subdivisions, six in all, each of which deals with a particular branch of the whole. The various subjects comprise :

1. The collection and collation of all information with regard to the military defence of the Empire, and the examination of all schemes of defence, in the strategical and scientific aspect.
2. The accumulation of all facts that can be obtained as to the military strength and resources of foreign powers. This covers accurate information on the military geography of the several

countries concerned, the physical features and the artificial treatment of their frontiers, and generally the value of their defensive lines. It embraces the fullest details that can be obtained of the armed strength of the three arms, not merely numbers of personnel and quantity of material but their organisation and the system of mobilisation, or in other words of raising the peace establishment to a war footing. The same sort of information is collected and recorded from all British colonies and possessions. It is the especial duty of the department under this head to provide at short notice the comprehensive reports already mentioned, upon any of these points.

3. Map-making in a military sense; the correcting of all existing maps by the light of latest knowledge, noting the changes made by the rectification of frontiers, the pressure of war, the improvements in the methods of moving troops by the creation of new railway lines or other communications.

4. The translation of foreign documents received by public departments, for which purpose the staff of the office is always strengthened by the employment of officers who are skilled linguists. There are generally some to be found in Queen Anne's Gate who are familiar with one or more of the languages current in the civilised world abroad.

Taking next the various subdivisions in detail, with the staff and the nature of the business apportioned to each, we have:

A. Controlled by a Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General, with the aid of a staff-captain and one military clerk. 'A' has at this moment only an 'acting' head; its permanent chief, Major Cooper, is at this moment in South Africa serving as senior A.D.C. to Sir Francis Clery in Natal. 'A' deals with all facts concerning

- (a) France, (b) Belgium, (c) Italy, (d) Spain, (e) Portugal, (f) Central and South American States, (g) Mexico.

B. With a similar staff, although its Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General, Major Altham, Royal Scots, is at this moment chief Intelligence officer in Ladysmith to Sir George White, takes

- (a) The British Colonies and all British Protectorates with their spheres of influence; (b) Polynesia and Oceania; (c) Cyprus; (d) South African Republic and Orange Free State, with the adjoining native states; and generally (e) Imperial defence.

C has for its permanent head Captain the Hon. H. A. Lawrence, 17th Lancers, Intelligence officer with Lieut.-General French, and it deals with

(a) Germany, (b) Netherlands, (c) Denmark, (d) Switzerland, (e) Sweden and Norway, (f) United States, (g) Cuba, Porto Rico and the Philippine Islands.

D has for permanent head Lieut.-Colonel Waters, an officer who speaks Russian, and is also an accomplished Oriental scholar; he is at present attached to Sir William Gatacre in the north-east of Cape Colony. 'D' is charged with

(a) Russia, (b) India, (c) Burmah, (d) Siam, (e) China, (f) Central Asia, (g) Japan, (h) Afghanistan, (j) Persia and Muscat, (k) Sokotra.

E has for chief Major Count Gleichen of the Grenadier Guards, now serving with his regiment in Lord Methuen's force upon the Modder River, and till lately assisted by, as staff-captain, Captain Forestier-Walker, also in South Africa with the 18th Field Battery in Lord Methuen's column. 'E' is responsible for

(a) Austro-Hungary, (b) the Ottoman Empire, (c) Roumania, (d) Greece, (e) Servia and Montenegro, (f) Bulgaria, (g) Crete, (h) Egypt, (j) Somaliland, (k) Congo Free State, (l) Morocco, (m) Abyssinia and all parts of Africa still under native rule.

F, which is under Major Grant and Lieut. Gwynn, R.E., is the map branch, and is concerned with the preparation of all military maps and their issue to the army, always excepting those under the Ordnance Survey and needed for engineer service. This sub-division considers all frontier questions, everywhere. It has attached to it a large map room, with an extensive collection of maps, plans, and charts; it has charge of astronomical calculations and records of positions fixed by the stars; it indexes all fresh geographical information, and notes the movements and discoveries of travellers and explorers.

L is the Librarian's sub-division, and it is controlled by Captain Cromie, LL.B., who is himself a mine of knowledge, loving the books on his well-filled shelves and always courteously ready to assist the authorised student and inquirer. The Librarian has the control of the office cipher, and the Government telegraphic code, and the records of telegraphic address.

The methods by which the Intelligence Department obtains the information which is as the breath to its nostrils, the main object indeed of its existence, cannot, and naturally ought not, to be publicly made known. But it may be taken as certain that they are for the most part open and avowable. In the first place any system of espionage is abhorrent to our spirit and traditions, and even if bribery and corruption were considered necessary there are no funds easily available for the payment of secret agents, and the purchase of news and facts underhand. The Intelligence Department has never been allowed to dip deep into the funds appropriated for secret service, and failing them there is no money to be had; every item of military expenditure is much too closely watched both by antecedent estimate and subsequent audit to leave any loophole for the appropriation of a single farthing to any purpose not distinctly and specifically stated. It may be argued that there are no very portentous secrets closely guarded against inquiry even by the most jealous of military hierarchies; this was the one fact plainly proved at the Dreyfus trial—the alleged leakage was not of serious consequence. Most things in the nature of very new inventions and warlike appliances become public property sooner or later, for the scientific mind works commonly in the same direction, and, as we have often seen, great discoveries are made in many different places at much the same time. Of course, an expert may come upon the fringe of something he has long suspected but could not quite evolve, and then gain his last inspiration by some happy chance. Some time back an eminent inventor and manufacturer of explosives verified the constitution of *mélinite* when it first came in by the adherence of only a few grains of the powder to his finger-nail when it was casually and unguardedly shown to him. From this to minute investigation and analysis, with the exact result he needed, was not difficult for the adroit chemist. But had he not succeeded in this way the discovery would no doubt have been made by someone else.

The rôle of the Intelligence Department is not, however, the prying out of coming changes and improvements so much as the keeping abreast of all established and recognised facts. It aspires to possess ample and exact knowledge of the condition of foreign armies and the military resources of foreign countries. It may not be always and immediately successful, nor is its information necessarily brought down to the latest date. We

have heard unpleasant rumours of late that it was hoodwinked by the guileful Boer, and that the Transvaal Government (as General Joubert has claimed) did really lay in vast stores of war material altogether unknown to our agents. How far this charge can be substantiated remains to be seen when all the *arcana* of our present War Office administration is laid bare. The 'Intelligence' in this matter must have depended upon the main channel for supplying news, namely the British representative at Pretoria, for there was no military attaché accredited to Mr. Conyngham Greene, and that diplomatic agent possessed no especial and technical skill to help him in acquiring military facts. Other sources of information were limited to officers travelling in or visiting the Transvaal, whose identity was for the most part known, and who would certainly not be permitted to see or verify much. It is on record, however, that in one case a British officer spent some time in Pretoria on the very eve of war, and was allowed to secure a number of mules for transmission across the frontier. He was no doubt in disguise, but even so he could not have learnt much of the advanced state of preparedness of the Boers nor probably would a full and particular report thereof have attracted much attention from a Government obstinately determined not to think evil of our almost undisguised enemies.

As against this alleged ignorance of their true strength and the consequent underestimate of the resistance to be expected, it is stated on seemingly unimpeachable authority, that the confidential reports supplied by the 'Intelligence,' but not at present made public, did really call attention to the numbers, efficiency, and generally excellent character of the Boer forces; that as regards the first the totals approximated pretty closely to those said to be now in the field, a statement still, of course, to be tested; that in the matter of ordnance, both in the quality and quantity of the Boer artillery, these were known almost gun for gun; and lastly, that their possession of Mauser rifles and vast stores of ammunition great and small was known as an undoubted fact. It is anticipating the fierce controversy that must soon rage on these points to claim no more than that the Intelligence Department actually raised its voice in warning, and that it, at least, is not to be blamed if the authorities entered too lightly upon the present costly struggle.

The chief and acknowledged props of our 'Intelligence' are the military attachés to our various ministries abroad. Theoreti-

cally they have no means of acquiring knowledge other than the official; practically they are, of course, aided by their powers of observation, the trained professional skill which can note at a glance things most worth knowing, such as the handling of artillery, the speed and weight of a cavalry charge, the probable value of some new 'order of attack.' The attaché, to be really useful, must also be a *persona grata* to the foreign officers of the country in which he is serving, and he often learns much from the *camaraderie* of the cloth and the free discussion of measures and methods. All this is work that is open and above board. We may not inquire too closely whether or not intelligence is gained by other means, but it is pretty certain that there are plenty of secret agents in every capital, eager to sell it at a price, and often very pertinacious in their offers of some particularly valuable bit of news. The game is seldom worth the candle, and it is exceedingly dangerous. Not many years back an attaché to the English Embassy to a great Power is said to have narrowly escaped arrest through intrigue with one of these unavowable persons. Possibly the foreign Government would not have proceeded to extremities with one of the *corps diplomatique*, but the pressure must have been very severe, for the story ran that the attaché found a passport waiting for him at his chancery, and was hurried across the frontier in rather undignified haste. The rumour said that other military attachés, of other nationalities, that is to say, were involved in the scrape, and had also to fly the country.

A glance at any of the papers prepared by the Intelligence will sufficiently prove that it obtains much that is worth knowing by legitimate means. Thus in the report on the changes in foreign armies which was published a couple of years back, and to which reference may now be made without breach of confidence, it will be found that ample information was afforded on many most interesting points. The question, then somewhat in its infancy, of the attitude of the great military powers towards quick-firing field guns, was discussed at length, how they were waiting on each other, France watching Germany, and *vice versa*, each flinching from the outlay and pausing till the other began. Now we know that France has made the first step, and according to the best informed artillerists has re-armed the field artillery with a very light quick-firer no more than a seven-p under, with such facilities for 'laying' and serving that it can be discharged with extraordinary rapidity. All this, which is now fully known, was long

foreshadowed by our Intelligence Department; so was the general introduction into the Austrian army of the Mannlicher 8 mm. repeating-rifle. Again, the whole of the army reorganisation of Japan, under the Bill brought in in 1896, is explained in detail; also the new cavalry drill introduced into Russia; the shortcomings of the Turkish army in every respect, the word 'neglect' written on every part of its organisation, are described in plain language. To these were added full particulars of the inadequacy of the armaments of the United States for the serious war just then imminent with Spain, and the still more deplorable unfitness of that last-named country to cope with it. The fullest information is afforded of the peace and war strength of the nations, and special attention is paid to the development of railway systems for military purposes, especially by Russia, Austria-Hungary, Japan, and even Turkey, which has of late years completed long lines of immense strategic importance.

It cannot be said that our Intelligence Department has been idle, or that it does not fully justify existence. On the one subject which has been questioned, that of its failure to keep pace with Boer activity in armament, the last word has not yet been said, and not the least important branch of the inevitable inquiry into the conduct of the present campaign will be to elicit how far the Government was warned of the Boer strength, and the weight it attached to the information received.

AT A FREE STATE TOLL-BAR.

DISTANCE in South Africa, except by the ever-growing foreign population, is never calculated in miles, but by hours on horse-back.

Smithfield, in the south of the Orange Free State, is, according to this way of reckoning, about three and a half hours from Rouxville, and the latter place about the same distance from Aliwal North, a border town in the extreme east of Cape Colony.

One sharp morning in autumn (*i.e.*, April) in the year 1899, I was driving an open dogcart, containing two ladies besides myself and a considerable quantity of luggage, in the direction of the iron bridge which spans the Caledon river midway between Smithfield and Rouxville. We were on our way to Aliwal. It was early; the first streaks of the awakening day illumined the heavens, while the sun's disc was as yet hiding behind the blue heights of Basutoland.

At the Caledon bridge is a toll where we intended to outspan. Mr. Van Pollen, the collector, an old acquaintance of mine, stepped out of his door with a hearty 'Good morning,' and immediately began to undo the traces of the off-horse. The ladies responded to the invitation extended to them by entering the house, and we finished the unharnessing of the horses, handed them over to a Kafir, and together took a stroll to the river-side. I inquired after Mr. Van Pollen's family and his prospects of receiving a Government appointment, for which I knew he had long hoped. Arriving at a grassy spot, and noticing how heavy the dew was, I anxiously asked whether he thought my horses were safe with the Kafir.

'Why not?' he asked.

'See how wet the grass is,' I replied. 'He might allow them to graze. They are stable horses, and mad for green stuff.'

'I think they are quite safe,' he said reassuringly. 'Besides, they are now across the "bult," going in the direction of the "dam," and we could not call him back if we tried ever so. You need not be afraid, he never makes a mistake of that sort, though so many travellers outspan here.'

Walking on, we descried a vehicle just coming over the heights to the south in our direction.

'More folks,' observed Mr. Van Pollen, drily.

'More toll,' said I.

'That is so,' he answered, 'but usually also more annoyance. Do you know that my house, small as it is, is nearly all day over-run with strangers? Besides, my parlour, the only available room, usually serves as a sleeping place for travellers all the year round. There is little pleasure in this kind of life.'

'But there must be a good many of what you might call interesting experiences in your life, though,' I observed. 'I dare not envy you the existence you lead exactly, but I confess that I should prefer some of the variety of it to the monotony of my own, cooped up as I am in a Free State village.'

'I dare say you would,' he answered with a smile. 'That feature of it is the only thing that makes my existence bearable in this lonely spot. I meet all kinds of men, hear all sorts of opinions expressed, have opportunity to observe the most diverse habits and manners, and generally occupy a place which in some ways would be filled to better advantage by a philosopher than a toll-gatherer.'

As we walked on, the vehicle we had perceived was coming down the road at a brisk pace, and drew up in front of the house as we reached there. The driver pulled up sharp, and saluted us with a gracious nod of the head. He was a bastard, which means a descendant of a Hottentot mother and a white father, a combination which has given birth to half the existing coloured population of the Cape Colony proper. In the Eastern parts this race is thinly represented. It is of Western origin, and has stuck to the scenes of its birth. It hails from the time when slavery was in vogue in South Africa, farmers and traders being responsible for its existence. Without it the aboriginal races of Western South Africa would most likely by now have ceased to exist. The whites, at their first advent, found them on the decline; an inferior class of human being, which was saved by the infusion of white blood alone from natural extirpation. They now form an important part of the Western population, enjoying full citizenship, and being by law ranked with the whites, though, on account of backwardness in development and civilisation, they constitute the plebeian portion of the community. The men of this type are much sought after as drivers, and are by colonial farmers regarded as almost priceless in this respect.

Handing Mr. Van Pollen a heavy portmanteau which filled the space between the splash-board and the front seat, the driver raised the movable left-hand side of the latter, and so cleared the way for a lady and gentleman to emerge from under the hood of the cart. The passengers alighted, and the gentleman, who was tall and lanky, having drawn himself up with a little grunt of relief, said: 'Allow me to introduce myself—my name is Geyser, and this lady is my wife. May I ask to whom I have the pleasure of speaking?'

He spoke Dutch, not the Dutch of Africa, but a kind that savoured peculiarly of Amsterdam. His tone was more than free, the words sounded audacious on the pure African air.

I pronounced Mr. Van Pollen's name and my own in the simplest, driest style imaginable, and joined in outspanning the horses, which is one of the essential compliments paid to any stranger who comes to one's door in Africa. I have witnessed the astounding sight of the President of the Orange Free State engaging in that self-same occupation, during a period of my life when I was a frequent visitor at the Bloemfontein White House.

Strangely was the reality of that for which I had expressed a desire presenting itself to me. Here was a stranger, apparently as raw as one could wish, with all his airs and graces, and hastily picked up ideas, in my very company. The suddenness of the apparition silenced me for a while, but I resolved to make the most of the unexpected encounter.

'Mr. Geyser,' said I, after the coachman was gone to water the horses and the lady had seated herself in the room—trying to shape my jaws so as to bring forth my most melodious Dutch, and render the difference between the sweet accent of the South and the harsh notes of the North all the more striking—'I presume you are a stranger here?'

'Yes, and no,' was the answer. 'True, I have just come from Holland; but now that I am beyond the boundary of the Cape Colony, I feel at home.'

'Are you on your way to Bloemfontein?' I queried.

'Precisely so,' he said, 'and from there I take the train to Pretoria.'

'On a holiday trip for your honeymoon, I suppose?'

'Not exactly,' he said, as a blush tinged his cheek; 'we were married eight days before we left Holland, and intend to

settle at Pretoria, where I have been appointed Lecturer in Physics.'

'I am glad you say you have been appointed,' I remarked.

'Why so?'

'Because so many go to the Transvaal who are not appointed!'

'True,' he replied, 'but they are Englishmen.'

'How do you know that I am speaking of Englishmen?' I asked with a keen look at his light, unsteady eyes. 'I did not mean Englishmen, as a matter of fact, but foreigners in general.'

'Hollanders are not looked upon as foreigners at Pretoria,' he retorted somewhat curtly.

'How do you know?' I inquired. 'Were you told so in Holland?'

'I received the fullest information in Holland regarding matters South African,' was the irritated reply.

'From whom?' I ventured to inquire.

'You must know,' he said, 'that ever since the retrocession there has been a remarkable *rapprochement* between Holland and the Transvaal. Shortly after the war in which the Boers made such a gallant stand against the English troops, Paul Kruger and party visited Holland. They presented themselves to the nation as brothers from a far-off country, who had come to claim kinship. They appeared as the representatives of a despised race which had lifted its head from under the yoke of impious oppression; and made out for themselves a case similar to that of Holland when, threatened by mighty Spain, it entrusted its sacred interests to the hands of William of Orange. The impression they made was a profound one—you can scarcely imagine how deep it was. The inmost soul of Holland was stirred. Imagination carried the people back to the never-to-be-forgotten days of Alva and Philip of Spain, two much anathematised names amongst my countrymen. Sympathy with the Transvaal was awakened everywhere. Promises of a new home for young and able-bodied young men were given and accepted. The Transvaal, basking in political freedom, virtually then and there concluded an unwritten treaty of amity with Holland.'

'As a result of the war,' I put in, by way of helping on the speaker.

'Precisely,' said he, pressing his glasses nearer to his eyes, so as to wrench from them a look of gravity, of which unaided, they

were incapable—'yes, as a result of the war, with its attending glory and the resultant exaltation of the Africander race in the eyes of all the great nations. That war more than anything has helped to cement the feeling of friendship and goodwill towards the Transvaal which the said visits of its delegates had brought about.'

'Was it admiration alone that gave rise to that?' I asked.

The voluble stranger did not notice the intent of my question. But then he was not aware that he was speaking to a man who had for eighteen long years had opportunity of watching the results of the affection which had at the time to which he alluded suddenly sprung up between the Transvaal and what it had pleased to call 'the Mother Country.'

I had throughout all those years regarded the said affectionate relation with great suspicion. Since I myself hailed from the land to which this man owed his birth, I knew how Hollanders were looked upon by South Africans previous to the date of this singular *rapprochement*. In fact, I had personally suffered through being a born Hollander. In the drawing-room of a leading minister of the Dutch Church I had had the honour of being introduced to a large Africander company as 'a gentleman, although a Hollander;' and it had happened more than once to me while visiting farms, and so coming in contact with the rural population, the backbone of the country, to hear regret expressed in the crudest fashion at my parentage—'a decent Hollander we have never yet seen' being the universal verdict. I had watched the doings in Holland of Paul Kruger and his then associates. I had received a report of my father's interview with him, an interview similar in intent and way of proceeding to many hundreds of others. Yea, and I had met the man when he returned from his mission, and discussed with him the very subject of which this stranger now reminded me. I was convinced that Holland had grasped the Transvaal's extended hand for the sake of gain. The idea of kinship was ludicrous. The Transvaal people, called 'Dutch,' never had Holland blood in them. The country was peopled by descendants of French refugees and Westphalian emigrants. Their affection for Holland was a *chimère*, now changed into a convenience. And still, the convenience was a good deal the other way round, as eighteen years had abundantly shown. Since Kruger's visit to Holland the Transvaal had been overrun by Holland adventurers, much to the country's own detriment.

It was singular to notice the effect of my query on my new companion. Drawing himself up to the full height of his bony stature, and peering oddly through his glasses at his keen interrogator, he replied:

‘Admiration indeed! It is innate in the Hollander to admire deeds of valour, imitative of the grand feats of war of his forefathers. What the Transvaal Boers accomplished on Majuba and Laing’s Nek won for them my nation’s love, which has since been amply manifested in the way my country has come to the Transvaal’s help.’

I was relieved to notice that this man had not guessed my nationality. Evidently I had played my part well. Though my language was ever so much purer than his, its greater melodiousness had hidden from his untutored ear the fact that I hailed from the land whose conduct he was preposterously advocating. The statement just made tickled me to such an extent that I could scarcely contain myself. Still, I went on as gravely as before.

‘And of what has that help consisted, pray?’

He saw the effort with which the question was framed, but failed to understand it.

‘We gave the Transvaal,’ was the reply, ‘able ministers of religion, supplied its courts with barristers, and its schools with teachers. We sent them men to bear the burden of its Civil Service; through Dr. Leyds we enabled it to aspire to the position of a sovereign State; while Dr. Mansvelt framed their educational system so as to enable young Transvaalers to prepare for learned professions in Holland.’

‘And you consider this to have been for the country’s good?’ I ventured to ask.

‘I am,’ he said, ‘a member of what is called the Holland-Transvaal Union. That society has its headquarters in Holland. It exists for the promotion of the welfare of the South African Republic. It watches its interests, sends out men to fill various posts, and has proved the country’s salvation.’

‘From which I conclude,’ I continued, ‘that you are one of the “sent,” and that you have come to co-operate in the salvation of the Transvaal.’

‘That is so,’ he rejoined, tossing his head with the utmost self-satisfaction.

‘Have you come to clear away the difficulties which seem to impede the course of the country’s progress?’ I said, heaving a

sigh. 'Doubtless you know that matters have begun to look very black.'

'I may perhaps tell you in strict confidence that just before I left I ascertained that Dr. Mansvelt's recall had been decided on. He has blundered, and will be superseded.'

A flutter of anger ran over my face at the impertinence of this young fellow's speech.

'Have you come to usurp his post?' I asked curtly.

'Not exactly,' he said; 'what makes you ask?'

'This, that I am shocked at what you have the daring to reveal. This latest piece of intelligence seems to seal the Transvaal's doom, or rather seems to assure me that its deliverance is about to come. But how will it come?'

'I do not understand you,' he stammered. 'What have I said that should excite you in this manner?'

Conscious that I had lost my tranquillity, and taking pity on the poor fellow—who, after all, knew no better, and had left home and hearth as the dupe of a most sad delusion—I walked up to him, slipped my arm through his, and whispered, 'Come with me.'

He allowed himself to be taken some fifty yards beyond the house, both of us walking on in silence, he through surprise, I on account of deep emotion. Then I said:

'Mr. Geyser, I am so glad I have met you. Your advent in this lonely spot was most opportune as far as I am concerned. The talk we have had has opened my eyes wider to the grim reality of things, the existence of which is beyond doubt, and of which the results must shortly be faced.'

'Explain yourself,' he said pressingly; 'you speak in riddles.'

'The Transvaal,' I continued, 'has sold herself. She has, to her own hurt, fallen into the hands, not of Holland, but of a Holland clique. What you have told me about Dr. Mansvelt, the superintendent of education, a Government-appointed official at Pretoria, has verified the gravest fears I ever allowed myself to entertain. The intriguing has gone as far as it ever will.'

'You'—he began, and then he stopped and looked at me—'you have a wrong idea of things. Evidently, you do not know the Holland nation.'

Looking him straight in the face and standing still, I said, with great composure: 'I am a Hollander myself. In Holland I was born, was there educated, and there I received my qualifications for life. More—I have studied the South African situation ever

since the retrocession. I love the Transvaal people and wish them well ; my soul is stirred within me to hear from your lips that they have actually sealed their doom, as I had long suspected.'

'But what do you mean?' he urged again.

'I mean this,' I continued, 'that the clique which in Holland appoints Transvaal officials in high places of responsibility, and also deposes them, has betrayed the South African Republic and alienated its people from the Africander nation in general. I mean, that the help you have furnished has been to the ultimate aggrandisement of the name of individual Hollanders, and equally to the detriment of the people who associate with them. I mean, that your interference in a country with which you had nothing in common has thrown the Transvaal out of joint with regard to South Africa as a whole, and made of that country a den of iniquity in the midst of a fair land. I mean, that your would-be saviours were adventurers who came for the sops of an ignorant Government, which entrusted to their superior intelligence places that should have been filled by South Africans, who could have intuitively worked the machinery of the border State in accord with the whole, to the furtherance of the common weal ; I mean, that your Holland clique has insidiously worked itself into the cogs of the wheel of State, and has come near to stopping the machinery for good.'

'You rave,' he said angrily, turning on his heel to leave me.

'Stay,' I said imperatively, 'I do not rave. You must hear me to the end, before you resume your hurried trip to Pretoria. The clouds are lowering. The horizon has a most unpropitious look. In a few months' time the storm may burst, and then, what will you do?'

'I fail to understand you again,' he expostulated.

'I pity you for telling the truth,' I said. 'I know you do not understand. But let me tell you further. Your clique, powerful as it is perverse, has cajoled the main section of the Transvaal population, the ignorant rural section of its community, into believing that it would be better to fix a wider gulf than already exists between it and England. Besides, the perfidy has spread to the State on whose soil we stand to-day. The ultimate outcome of this will be bloodshed. You may not believe what I say, but I am aware of the inevitable result. And then, if that comes to pass, will Holland shoulder the terrible load of responsibility which will have to be borne by someone?'

'I cannot see things as you do,' he exclaimed. 'I am on my way to the Transvaal to add my weight to Holland preponderance for the salvation of the country.'

'You do not know what you say,' I remonstrated gently. 'If you have any weight—that is, if you feel you are destined to be somebody on South African soil—take in the situation to-day. Acknowledge first of all that the Transvaal Government has become the dupe of a foreign clique, and allow the unrighteousness of that state of things. Then consider England. Study the way its interests are bound up with all South Africa, even with the Transvaal itself. Study the case of the preponderating *Uitlander* population. Review the necessity of arranging for working one section of our South African community in accord with the other portions. Remember, we are but one nation, though we may sail under different flags. England's influence is essential to us; besides, it is healthful and tends to unity. Yours is a foreign element, is destructive of peace, and bars national development.'

Every muscle of the man's face was working by this time. Anger, conviction, foolish pride, and the impudence resulting from ignorance were contending in his soul. Clearly did the strife depict itself on his lean, ugly face. He looked toward the toll house; evidently he wanted to go.

'You cannot go yet,' I resumed, 'it would not do. You must at least be fully informed, even if you will not or cannot be convinced. What is before you is too dreadful to be faced unarmed. In a few months' time, God alone knows how soon, you may have to shoulder a rifle and go to meet England on the field of battle.'

'Phew,' he exclaimed airily, 'I don't know what you are dreaming of.'

'But I know,' I said. 'I have seen it coming for a long time, and know it to be near. I am aware that the Transvaal so-called Dutch do not see the situation. Less still do they perceive what has led up to it. But the day is coming when they will see it. And that day will be one of cruel awakening, to be followed by another of stern reckoning. This evil must fall on the heads of those who are the instigators. The great calamity which menaces South Africa, and, moreover, seems almost inevitable, will be wreaked eventually on the heads of the guilty.'

'You mean the Hollanders?' he asked fiercely.

'Allow yourself to be disillusioned,' I said, almost in a begging

since the retrocession. I love the Transvaal people and wish them well; my soul is stirred within me to hear from your lips that they have actually sealed their doom, as I had long suspected.'

'But what do you mean?' he urged again.

'I mean this,' I continued, 'that the clique which in Holland appoints Transvaal officials in high places of responsibility, and also deposes them, has betrayed the South African Republic and alienated its people from the Afrikaner nation in general. I mean, that the help you have furnished has been to the ultimate aggrandisement of the name of individual Hollanders, and equally to the detriment of the people who associate with them. I mean, that your interference in a country with which you had nothing in common has thrown the Transvaal out of joint with regard to South Africa as a whole, and made of that country a den of iniquity in the midst of a fair land. I mean, that your would-be saviours were adventurers who came for the sops of an ignorant Government, which entrusted to their superior intelligence places that should have been filled by South Africans, who could have intuitively worked the machinery of the border State in accord with the whole, to the furtherance of the common weal; I mean, that your Holland clique has insidiously worked itself into the cogs of the wheel of State, and has come near to stopping the machinery for good.'

'You rave,' he said angrily, turning on his heel to leave me.

'Stay,' I said imperatively, 'I do not rave. You must hear me to the end, before you resume your hurried trip to Pretoria. The clouds are lowering. The horizon has a most unpropitious look. In a few months' time the storm may burst, and then, what will you do?'

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‘You mean the Hollanders?’ he asked fiercely.

‘Allow yourself to be disillusioned,’ I said, almost in a begging

tone. 'Suppose folly should reach its height and bloodshed ensue in these fair African fields; suppose it should come to choosing sides, where would you stand and where advise others to stand?'

'Against England,' was the firm reply.

'For any reason?' I queried.

'Out of grudge against the mistress of the seas, which grudge has become a national characteristic of my people.'

'That is well,' I said; 'but the Transvaalers, what side should they take?'

'Against England,' he repeated.

'And the results, what would they be?'

'A free Transvaal nation, allied to Holland, supported by the only country whose language and customs, natural tendencies, and tastes are akin to those of the Transvaal.'

'Who told you they were?' I asked with a smile.

'We spent all last winter in our Union meetings in Amsterdam studying the subject. I know of what I am speaking.'

'I suppose you do,' I said, 'and your utterances strangely bear out my fears; but there is one thing you must understand before we part. I cannot rest satisfied until you do.'

'What is that?' he inquired, with some show of kindliness born of curiosity.

'That is,' I rejoined, 'that as soon as you reach Pretoria, look about you, make the acquaintances to which you look forward, see the preparations for war which are reported to be going on even at the present moment, observe the under-current of social life, and begin to weigh the meaning of what you see and hear. You will make up your mind that the Holland clique began ruining the Transvaal shortly after the retrocession, has completed its ruin in eighteen years, and is now on the brink of plunging South Africa into a bloody, sad, and unrighteous war simply as the outcome of its tactics.'

Curling his upper lip as if to hide his thin moustache in his nostrils, he ejaculated: 'You lie; you are a traitor to your country and its highest interests, a Hollander by name, an Englishman in deed and in truth.'

'I call myself an Africander,' I said calmly, 'by reason of over twenty years' residence in this country. It is to inform you, not to tell lies, that I speak to you to-day. You may shortly remember my words when the bomb has burst.'

'You are cruel in the extreme,' he retorted, 'to lay the blame

of a South African war on the Holland gentlemen who came out to this country in the service of an honest cause.'

'I may so seem to be,' I replied, 'but I am convinced that your clique will have to bear that blame. I will not speak angrily to you—who, after all, know nothing but what you have from hearsay—but let me ask you to reflect. Who makes life in the Transvaal unbearable to the *Uitlander* population but the Holland faction in the Government? Without its baneful influence, would not the Africander in the mining sections have got along equally well with an English colonist as they do in the Free State, in Cape Colony, in Natal? Again, who wearied the *Uitlander* population with the school question, until it turned away from the Government in utter despair? Again, who plagued the *Uitlanders* with the use of the Dutch only in all official correspondence? Who estranged the *Uitlanders* from the Government by advising against their due representation? Tell me, what influence was it that made the Africander in the Transvaal such a different being from what he is anywhere else, especially with regard to the treatment of foreigners, with whom he proverbially gets along so well?'

'I do not know about these things,' he said, 'nor do I choose to prolong this conversation. I must go to the house, and see after my horses.'

'So must I,' I said.

And with these words we both turned back. Not a word more was said on the subject. We looked after our horses, and rejoined the ladies, and chatted about the beautiful morning we were having, and then inspanned, and took leave of one another, Mr. Geyser going North and we South.

Nor did we ever hear again from Mr. Geyser. Never, until we read his name among the list of those who had been wounded in battle and removed to the military hospital at Wynberg, near Cape Town.

We met him in April; he was wounded in the hip in November. He must have thought of my words at some time.

Thank God, he lives. He has escaped with a stiff limb for life.

Many, very many others have been cruelly swept out of existence. Most of them were innocent men. All, however, have fallen victims of the Hollander clique at Pretoria, whose *raison d'être* was 'the Salvation of the Transvaal.'

FREIHEER VON ELFT.

BY THE WATERS OF MARAH.

A SOUTH AFRICAN TALE.

'And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter.'—*Exodus* xv. 23.

I.

IT was in the old and, by some at least, ever-to-be-regretted days of the ox-waggon that the following strange experience befell me. These were days when the Boers were invariably hospitable to strangers (who did not arrive on foot), when the natives had still some respect for the white man, and when game was still to be had for the hunting on the high plains of South Africa.

We had left our waggons at Shoshong, in what is now Khama's country, and struck out with three pack oxen and six 'boys' towards the north-west, vaguely hoping to reach Lake Ngami. At that time, a quarter of a century ago, little was known of that interior which has now become a sort of Cook's Tourist Route, and consequently the traveller had always the vague charm of the unknown around him, whilst the fluttering hem of the garment of the fascinating nymph whose name is Adventure gleamed in every thicket. Maps, it is true, existed, but were so incorrect as to be a distinct disadvantage to the wanderer, for the reason that all those extant were fearfully and ingeniously incorrect. We had once nearly lost our lives through trusting to an indication of a supposed water-place upon a brand-new chart prepared by a distinguished traveller, who believed every yarn told him, and who, it is now well known, did not visit half the places he described from alleged personal observation.

Dick Wharton, Sam Logan, and I formed the party. We were all young, in good health, and keen shots. We hardly expected to reach the Lake, but we knew that there was plenty of shooting to be had in the direction in which it lay, and that was all that we particularly cared about.

The country, usually a grim desert, was now a smiling garden. For two seasons rain had fallen in phenomenal abundance, and the wayward bounty of Heaven had caused the long-dormant

vegetation to spring up over the length and breadth of the land. The flowers were scattered everywhere in bewildering beauty, and the insects held constant revel in the mild sunshine. Water was to be found by digging, hardly a foot deep, in every donga, and all the game in Africa seemed to have collected in the northern zone of the Kalihari.

We wandered on, taking our journey easily, resting as suited our mood whenever we reached some particularly charming spot. Indeed, it almost seemed as though the wild creatures had the same æsthetic sense as ourselves, for it was almost invariably at such places that we found game in the greatest plenty. The delight of those days is, and I trust ever will be, an abiding remembrance. We slept comparatively little, for sleep seemed but a waste of time, and it was better to lie awake under the soft stars or the regal moon, listening to the wild sounds of the desert, than to waste our precious hours in barren unconsciousness. Whilst our three pack oxen, tied to a tree hard by and surrounded by a fence of thorn bushes, chewed the cud of plenty or drew the deep, sighing breath of bovine alarm, we would lie watching the flames leaping from the kindled logs, and listening to the grunting of the lions, the booming of the ostriches, or the screaming of the hyænas. We did not dread the lions, for we knew that where game was plentiful the king killer of the waste seldom troubled man or his cattle. Our natives could always be trusted to keep the fires alight. They were continually full of meat, and therefore happy.

I may as well say at once that we never reached Lake Ngami. As a matter of fact, we did not go much more than two-thirds of the way to it. We dawdled upon our course to such an extent that we were obliged to return from a spot seven days' march beyond the Lutyahau River.

Hunters familiar with the regions indicated have all heard of the bitter wells, with the unpronounceable Bushman name, not a great many days' journey from Anderson's Vley. The water found in these wells is extremely poisonous to Europeans. A few Bushmen, who have habituated themselves to its use, are always to be found in the vicinity, but woe betide the unhappy human creature of any other breed who slakes his thirst at this poisonous spot; he will almost assuredly die if obliged to drink the water for three days in succession. This spot can only be visited by hunters with safety upon the rare occasions when the rains have fallen so heavily on the surrounding country that water is obtain-

able in the sand-filled rocky hollows, of which this area of the desert is full. Taking advantage of the splendid condition of the country, we determined to make a *détour* to the southward for the purpose of visiting this little-frequented spot.

We arrived late one afternoon, and found the place deserted, although showing signs of having recently been inhabited by human beings. We knew what had taken place—the Bushmen had fled in alarm at our approach, but we felt sure of meeting some of them within the next few days.

The locality was desolate in the extreme, for the rich vegetation ceased on every side within about a mile of the muddy puddles. These formed a small group in a shallow depression some hundred yards in diameter. The surrounding soil was evidently strongly charged with some alkaline substance, which lay thickly on the surface in the form of white powder. The water had a brownish tinge where it oozed out of the soil, and gave forth an unpleasant smell, as though of decaying vegetable matter.

We soon found sweet rain-water in a donga close by, so decided to rest for a few days. Rest is hardly the right term to use, for we worked exceedingly hard. Each member of the party had his own favourite game. Dick was not content with the slaughter of anything less than the King of Beasts, Sam enjoyed shooting koodoos more than anything else, whilst the slaying of the gentle giraffe brought the keenest joy to my hunter's heart. Consequently, we three, although the best of chums, seldom hunted together. Each preferred to take a couple of 'boys' and follow the chase of that which his soul panted for.

On the day following our arrival at the bitter wells I took my rifle and wandered forth towards a considerable clump of comparatively large trees, which could be descried about seven miles away to the westward, and where I expected to meet with my favourite game. It was nearly midday when I reached the trees, and just upon entering the grove I was astonished to see the spoor of a large sandal leading along a game-path. The spoor was certainly not that of a Bushman, its length being too great and the impression too heavy. I pointed it out to one of my followers, who uttered a low exclamation of surprise, and then we followed the track silently into the thickest part of the grove.

On turning a sharp corner we suddenly stood still, for a small hut, or 'scherm,' constructed of bushes and fragments of skin,

stood before us. It was not so much a hut as a kind of movable screen such as the Hottentots use—one that could be shifted with little difficulty to meet the changing wind. Its back was towards us. After pausing for a few seconds, I stepped forward and looked under the roof of the structure from the other side.

Again I stood still, my eyes being riveted by the strangest-looking human creature it has ever been my lot to behold. The man was reclining on a few jackal skins, and resting on his elbow. He was quite naked except for a tanned hide, which was tied with a thong around his middle. In spite of the dark and rough condition of his skin, his long matted hair and beard clearly showed him to be a European. The hair hung over his shoulders in a white fleece, and the beard lay upon his chest in a long silvery tangle. His face was a striking one; the forehead was high and intellectual, the nose prominent and somewhat hooked, the eyes were dark and deep, and gleamed splenetically from under the shaggy and prominent brows.

My two followers ran back with exclamations of terror, and crouched behind a bush about thirty yards away. I myself, feeling more astonishment than alarm, looked hard at the man, who gazed back fixedly without the least appearance of surprise or embarrassment. Then I took a step nearer and spoke.

‘Good day. Who are you?’

‘One who will never trouble you as much as you trouble him,’ came the surly reply.

The voice had an even, metallic tone—a tone which I was strangely reminded of years afterwards when I first listened to a phonograph. There was a queer suggestion of impersonality about it. I tried to think of something to say, but could not find a word, so taken aback was I. The man’s eyes rested on mine like those of an animated sphinx, and seemed to exercise a queer kind of mesmerism. Withdrawing mine with difficulty, I glanced around the ‘scherm,’ and took a rapid survey of its contents. I noticed a number of sticks, pared flat, and with the edges full of little notches. A Bushman’s bow and a quiver of arrows were stuck behind one of the supports, and a skin wallet hung from another. Several curiously knobbed sticks lay on the floor, and a lump of raw meat, which was in course of being invaded by an army of small red ants, was stuck in the fork of a stake planted in the ground. Several ostrich egg-shells, with small wooden pegs inserted at each end, lay about.

The silence became oppressive. The man still gazed at me, and I glanced nervously and rapidly at him from time to time. The thought that he perhaps was a lunatic crossed my mind, and I quickly surveyed his build in view of the possibility of a struggle. The conclusion I came to was that I should prefer to decline a contest. The man was old and rather emaciated, but his muscles looked as hard as the pasterns of a springbuck.

'Is there much game hereabouts?' I hazarded.

The strange being suddenly stood up, and I was astonished at his height. I involuntarily stepped back a couple of paces as he emerged from the 'schem.' He stretched forth his hand towards me, but not in a threatening manner—although his eyes seemed to blaze—and spoke in the same strange pitch, but much more loudly than before.

'Is not the desert wide enough that you come here to trouble me? You have the whole world for your hunting-ground, and I have only this little spot. Get you gone and trouble me no more, or I will get the Bushmen to drive you off.'

I began to lose my nervousness completely—although I could not help seeing that the man's threat was a serious one. Bushmen had not been giving much trouble of late years; however, I knew they existed in considerable numbers in that particular area of the Great Desert. Probably this strange being possessed some influence over them, and if so, nothing would be more easy than to have us killed when sitting around our camp fire by means of a volley of poisoned arrows poured in at point-blank range. Such occurrences had happened before.

'Man alive,' I said in a cheerful voice, 'I don't want to interfere with you; I came here quite by accident, and I shall go on my way without giving you any trouble whatever. Ta ta—I hope you are enjoying your picnic.'

I turned on my heel, but he called out to me to stop, and I again faced round.

'How many are there in your party?' he said, after giving me a long, fixed look.

'Two other white men and six boys.'

'Wait for just a moment. I want to have a few words with you.'

I set my rifle against the stump of a tree and stood before him with my arms folded. The creature seemed to have become more human.

'Would it be of any use asking you not to tell your companions anything about your having met me?'

'Well—you see—I have my two boys with me; even if I hold my tongue they are sure to talk.'

A queer ghost of a smile seemed to flit across the stern face.

'I know you will keep your word if you give it,' he replied, 'and I will make it right with the boys. Will you promise? Take time to think if you like.'

A great pity for the poor creature before me seemed to swell in my breast. Why should I not grant his request? Why should I darken, in no matter how slight a degree, a life apparently overloaded by some great tragedy? Of course I felt flattered by his estimate of my veracity.

'Yes, I promise,' I said.

His face softened, and the tension of his limbs seemed to relax. When next he spoke the tone of his voice had quite changed.

'Ah! I find that I am not as dead as I thought. Yours is the first English voice I have heard for over twenty years. I wonder what fate brought you here to wake me back to pain. Give me a grasp of your hand and then go.'

I held out my hand, and he seized it with a grip of iron. We looked into each other's eyes for a moment, and mine dimmed with tears.

'Can you not come away with us?' I asked.

He shook his head vigorously.

'Is there nothing I can do for you—give you?'

'If you have at your camp any sort of a knife to spare I should be glad of it.'

'Right, I will bring you one to-morrow. And you need not fear that I will say a word about you. Of course I cannot answer for the boys.'

I picked up my gun and strode away rapidly, not wishing to give him an opportunity of changing his mind. When I reached the bush behind which my boys were crouching, they looked towards, and then past me, with expressions of the utmost terror. I turned and found that the man was closely and noiselessly following me. He beckoned to the boys, who arose and followed him, crouching as they went. I sat down and awaited events. In a few minutes the boys returned, their faces ashen and their heads bent. I strode on and they followed me in complete silence.

I did not then make for the camp, but for a low ridge to the northward, on which a number of 'camel-thorn' trees were visible. Here I wounded a fine bull giraffe. Following the spoor took up the rest of the day, and the sun was down before the poor brute lay before me dead. We camped for the night alongside the carcase, there being a wet donga close at hand. After a good supper, in which that most delicate of delicacies, giraffe marrow, was an important element, I lit my pipe and basked in the blaze of the logs. I had noticed that my two boys were silent and depressed.

'Wildebeste,' I said, addressing the senior, 'what do you think of the man we saw to-day?'

Wildebeste glanced uneasily over his shoulder into the darkness and replied in a low tone:

'I saw no man to-day, Baas; neither did Ghola, nor even the Baas himself.'

Both boys covered their heads with the fragments of skin which did duty for clothing and lay down. When I addressed them a few minutes afterwards both pretended to be fast asleep, but I could tell by their breathing that they were wide awake.

The sun was high when I reached the bitter wells next morning. My two companions had gone away exploring to the southward; they had left a note explaining that they would probably not return till the following day. This suited me exactly. I had never been able to lie skilfully, and I hated having to deceive my chums. It may, therefore, be well imagined that I was somewhat uneasy on the subject of my secret.

After a short rest, I again set off westward, taking with me the spare knife. The sun was just setting when I reached the grove. The strange man was still in his 'schirm.' A new piece of meat hung upon the forked stick; nothing else appeared to have been changed since the previous day. We sat up the whole night—he talking and I listening to what surely must have been one of the saddest and strangest tales ever poured into a human ear.

I passed my word to the effect that for twenty years, not only would I never mention a word of what he told me, but that I would not even write it down. It will, accordingly, be understood that a good deal of the language in which the tale is set forth is rather mine than his. I have, however, a very vivid recollection of the circumstances related—in fact, many of the phrases used have never faded from my memory.

After various experiments as to the best mode of relation I find that telling as though in the first person seems the most effective.

II.

'I went to sea as a boy and, in the late forties, was mate of a ship which ran ashore on the coast of the Cape Colony, somewhere to the eastward of Cape Agulhas. I disliked the sea; and when I managed to obtain a clerkship in a store in Cape Town, determined to spend the rest of my life ashore. But I soon sickened of town life. I had always longed to visit the great unknown interior and to shoot big game, but without means this was, of course, impossible.

'At length, I found myself with a few pounds in my pocket, so I bought a small waggon and a team of oxen, and commenced business on my own account as a travelling trader. I used to obtain goods in Cape Town on credit, take them up-country to barter with, and afterwards return with cattle and sheep, which I sold to the butchers at a good profit.

'My business prospered, so that within a few years I found myself in a position to realise my dream of taking a trip up-country. I possessed a strong, comfortable waggon, sixteen good oxen, and three smart ponies—all of which I had obtained by trading. I bought several good guns, a lot of gunpowder and lead, and, in fact, a complete hunting and trading outfit.

'I had no fixed plan. Time was no object, so I meant to travel northward in a leisurely manner, resting whenever I felt inclined to, or when my cattle required to pick up in point of condition. Being a handy man with tools, I knew I could repair my waggon or guns should they require it. I spoke Dutch well, and I took a lot of stuff for the purpose of trading with the Boers for food.

'Always a solitary man, I did not feel the need of a companion, but I took two servants with me—an old Hottentot named Danster and his grandson, a lad of sixteen. These had been in my service for several years, and were willing to follow me anywhere.

'It was October when I started, and it was well on in September of the following year before I reached the Orange River. The course I had taken was somewhere to the westward of the usual

trade route. I wanted to see as much unknown country as possible, and I had an idea that gold might be found in the great, high, central plain. The rains had fallen more plentifully than for years previously—almost as heavily as they have fallen here this season—so I had an easy time of it. I just went slowly along, shooting game when I wanted meat and pausing when the desire to rest came over me. The farther northward I went, the scarcer became the farms, until at length the only people I met were the few wandering Boers who lived in waggons and mat-houses and moved about on the track of the rains.

‘Fate or chance led me to a bend in the Orange River where a certain Boer and his family dwelt. Although the family spoke nothing but Dutch, this Boer was a Scotchman by birth. He had come to Africa when a child, and had spent his life on the fringe of the desert. He was now old, blind, and feeble, and had evidently not long to live. The family consisted of three sons—the eldest being twenty-five and the youngest nineteen years of age—and a niece, a girl of eighteen. These young men were the three greatest scoundrels it has ever been my lot to meet, but the girl was beautiful and good, and I loved her from the first moment my eyes rested on her face.

‘I will try to describe the homestead and its dwellers. The house was small and low, built of round stones with mud plaster and thatched with reeds. The furniture was rough-hewn from logs carried down by the great river when in flood. The old Boer was rich in cattle, sheep and horses. Grain was grown on a patch of sandy ground which was sometimes fertilised by the river when at its highest flood. Brayed skins served principally for clothing and wholly for bedding.

‘Piet, the eldest of the brothers, was a tall, melancholy man with a narrow face, thick lips, and hair the colour of a fox. Gerrit, the second, was short and powerfully built. He had black eyes, beard and hair, and his complexion was swarthy. He was passionate and cruel, and the poor old man used to shake at the sound of his voice. Sandy, the youngest, was a powerfully built fellow, and also had red hair. His face was like that of a weasel. He was lame from an injury received in childhood, but so strong that he could hold fast the leg of an ox no matter how hard the animal kicked. He seldom spoke, and he had the strongest aversion to meeting with his pale eyes even the glance of anyone else.

‘And the girl,—how shall a man describe the first and only

woman he has loved—and that after she has been dead for twenty years? Alida was dark, dark as a gipsy, and of middle height. I had not seen much of woman—I had never pleased them, nor had they been attracted by me—so, although thirty-five years of age, I had not thought of marrying. But here, in this God-forgotten corner of the wilderness, I suddenly came face to face with my mate, clad in rough skins that could not hide her beauty, and as ready to go with me to the end of the world as I was to take her.

‘Alida was the orphan daughter of the blind old man’s only brother. He and his wife had both been killed by lightning in a mat-house when Alida was a baby, and the child had been dragged out from under the flaming roof by an old Bushwoman. Then her uncle adopted her, and she grew up in the rough, uncouth household like a gazelle among swine.

‘It was a strange household: the old man lived in terror of his sons, and it was Alida who took his part and protected him from their violence. His wife had been dead three years, and he longed for the day of his own release. Every night he would pray aloud before going to bed, and the sons would mock him to his face. These three young men hated each other, and they all tormented the girl with proffers of love, she meeting their advances with the utmost scorn.

‘A few days after my arrival at the homestead Piet recommended me to send my oxen to graze on a certain ridge within sight of the house, where the grass looked green and luxuriant. I did so, and within three days all my team except four were dead. The ridge was covered with the dreaded “tulp,” which is deadly poison to all cattle. I am satisfied that the three brothers put their villainous heads together and devised this infamy with the view of getting possession of the contents of my waggon, which they coveted. I was in despair, for I could see no plan of replacing the cattle except by parting with most of my trading stock, and without this I could not proceed upon my trip. There appeared no way out of the difficulty, so I thought to remain where I was for a short time and then endeavour to make my way back to Cape Town.

‘Such is the effect of a guilty conscience that the three ruffians could not bear to be in my presence; they appeared to dread my face, so they spent most of their time away from the homestead. In fact, they made a practice of taking their guns

early in the morning and making for the veldt, whence they returned late at night, and at once went sulkily to bed. Thus, they never suspected that there was anything of the nature of love between Alida and myself, whereas we had come to an understanding within a week of the disaster to my cattle. It came about thus. One night after Piet had come in, I heard Alida reproach him for his dastardly deed, which he did not attempt to deny. Next day, when the coast was clear, I mentioned the subject to her, and she burst into a flood of tears. Then I tried to comfort her, and we soon found out that we were more important to each other than all else that the world contained.

‘I asked her to come away with me, but she refused to leave the old man, so I made up my mind to stay near her, at all risks, until his death, and then to take her and make her my wife. I knew that the old man could not live much longer; he became feebler day by day. The murder of my oxen, which he had heard discussed, preyed upon his mind to such an extent that he became rapidly weaker, and at length was unable to leave his bed.

‘I heard of a Hottentot camp situated some three days’ journey away, up the river, so I sent old Danster, my servant, to see if he could purchase any cattle there. My idea was to dispose of some of my stock-in-trade and acquire a sufficient number of oxen to enable me to get away with my waggon as soon as ever Alida should be free. The brothers had refused to sell me any cattle except at an impossibly exorbitant rate. I knew there would be extraordinary difficulty in getting Alida out of the clutches of her cousins, but the thing had to be accomplished somehow or another.

‘In six days’ time Danster returned with a favourable report, so I made secret preparations for my departure. By this time the brothers had begun to feel suspicious of my relations with their cousin, so one of their number always hung about the homestead.

‘My intention was to load three of my four remaining oxen, which had been trained to the pack, with tobacco, coloured handkerchiefs and other stuff which I knew the Hottentots valued, and then steal away, unobserved if possible. I reckoned on being able to obtain six animals. These, with my other four, would suffice to pull the waggon with its diminished load. Danster had done his best to induce the Hottentots to bring their cattle down for me to see, but the reputation of the brothers was so evil

that no one from the encampment would venture near the farm.

'At the same time preparations for a journey, the object of which I never learned, were being carried on by the brothers. Guns, saddles and other gear were furbished up, and horses carefully selected out of the half-wild herd. Alida managed to let me know that Piet and Gerrit were going away, and were not expected to return for five or six days. I looked upon this as a piece of good luck, and determined to take my departure immediately after they had started.

'Next morning at daybreak the two mounted their horses and rode forth, and no sooner were they out of sight than I sent Danster to drive up my oxen. The packs were ready, so I hurriedly adjusted them and, after bidding farewell to Alida and the old man, made haste in the direction of the Hottentot camp. The last thing I saw as I left the homestead was the evil face of Sandy peering like a weasel round the corner of the building.

'I travelled all day and camped at sundown. So tired was I that I fell asleep at once, leaving old Danster to collect fuel and tie up the oxen. The distance I had travelled was not great, but the slowness of the gait of the oxen had tired me. The last thing I remember is seeing old Danster nodding drowsily over the newly-kindled fire. His grandson had been left at the farm to look after my remaining ox.

'I cannot upon natural grounds account for the next thing I became cognisant of. I found myself standing up, looking at the figure of the old Boer, which stood on the other side of the fire. It was splashed by the flickering flame against the black night, and as clear to my startled gaze as you are at this moment. The sightless eyes were wide open and full of unwonted expression, and one arm was extended imperatively in the direction of the homestead. There was an expression of sternness on the worn face which I had never previously seen, and the wasted form seemed instinct with dignity.

'I never doubted that it was indeed the old Boer in the flesh that stood before me, but my mind was in a whirl of wonder as to how he had managed to follow me, and I never doubted that Alida was at hand, but an eddying gust of smoke filled my eyes, and I closed them for an instant. When I opened them again the figure had vanished, and then I knew it for a vision.

'In an instant the truth, clear and inevitable, pierced my

brain—Alida was in danger and the old man was dead; his spirit had come to warn me. I seized my gun and bandolier from where they lay, close to the head of my couch, took a hurried glance at old Danster, who was huddled, snoring, close to the fire, and plunged into the darkness.

III.

‘I had a long distance to cover, so I husbanded my strength. The night was calm, still and starlit when I started. I judged the time to be about midnight. My mind was in a curiously exalted condition; clear, tense and braced to its purpose like a tempered steel spring. I felt that I could have swept an army of men or devils from my path. My course lay across a succession of low, wide ridges with gently sloping sides, each culminating in an abrupt backbone of bare boulders, the whole inclining slightly towards the river.

Whenever my way led up-hill I walked. On reaching the top I drew breath for a few seconds, and then went down the next slope at a swinging trot. I found both strength and wind improve as I proceeded. Dawn just began to flicker as I reached the comb of the last ridge, from which I knew that the homestead was visible by daylight about three miles away. Then something which I had taken for a stone in my path arose before me, and in a few seconds Alida stood revealed. She stretched out her hand towards me with a gesture of appeal; I dropped my gun and folded her in my arms. Neither of us spoke a word.

‘After a few seconds she disengaged herself from my embrace, took my hand and led me forward towards the homestead. The glimmer of dawn began to merge into the gold of morning, and by the time we reached the dwelling the level shafts of sunlight were searching the crests of every tree and kopje. Although Alida had not once broken her silence I knew that something terrible had occurred, but I felt no curiosity; I did not wish the ear to anticipate the eye in the revelation which was about to be made. The front door of the homestead stood wide open; no sign of life was visible, and the only sound which smote on my tense ear was the howling of a dog down near the river.

‘Pausing before the doorway, Alida and I looked into each other’s eyes for an instant, during which earth and sky seemed to pause in dreadful expectancy, and the pulse of time to cease. The

girl's face was drawn and pallid, and wore an expression of the bitterest agony. She took my hand and drew me into the house.

'The front room was in the same condition as when I had last seen it, except that the table bore the remains of last evening's meal, and that a chair lay overturned against the wall, as though it had been hurriedly flung out of someone's way. The old man's bedroom opened to the left, and into it Alida led me.

'The wooden shutters were closed, so the only light was the faint glimmer which filtered through the front room. Alida strode to the window and, avoiding something which lay on the floor, threw back one shutter. In an instant the room was flooded with sunshine. On the bed lay the old man, dead, with the same expression on the worn face which I had noticed in my vision of the previous night. Under the window lay the corpse of Sandy, with a deep gash on the right temple, from which a trickle of black blood had oozed and congealed upon the clay floor.

'The whole room was in a state of disorder, and showed signs of a violent struggle. I passed my arm around Alida's body and drew her, half-fainting, from the room. We walked some distance from the house and seated ourselves in the pure, bright sunshine. Then she told me her tale.

'The old man had been taken with what must have been a fit immediately after supper on the previous evening, and died within a few minutes. Sandy went outside, and Alida remained with the body to carry out the necessary arrangements. About midnight Sandy returned, and tried to induce her to go to her room. She refused, and he began to use force. Then his brutish intention became clear to her. In the very room where the dead man lay this fiend laid his hot hands upon the girl who had grown up in the house with him like his sister. Fortunately she was strong, and able to make an effective resistance. In the struggle his foot slipped, and he fell with his head against the sharp wooden corner of his father's cartel bedstead; this pierced to his brain through the thin bone, and the foul brute fell, dead, to the floor.

'She showed me the black bruises upon her beautiful arms and shoulders, and I kissed them, one by one. Then I left her sitting upon the stone and went to drive up the cattle, which, fortunately, were close at hand in the big river bend. I could not find old Danster's grandson; in fact, not a soul was to be seen about the place. The Hottentots had evidently got scent of the tragedy, and bolted.

‘After driving the cattle into the kraal, I called Alida to my assistance, and together we selected sixteen of the best. She knew all the animals individually. We caught them by passing reins over their horns. Then we filled the waggon—which stood close by—with provisions, ammunition, and other necessary things. My goods had been stored in a little outhouse; I selected some of these and added them to the load. Before noon the team stood ready in the yoke. I entered the house and took a last look at the scene of the tragedy. Upon coming from the room Alida met me in the doorway:

“Bring him with you, and we will bury him beyond the river,” she said.

‘I returned to the room and wrapped the body in a large kaross which lay upon the bed. Although much emaciated, the body seemed strangely light for its build. We laid it reverently upon the waggon-cartel, and I seized the whip. Alida took her place in front of the team as leader, and the heavy waggon rumbled down the stony track towards the river drift.

‘We travelled about six hours before outspanning. It was then sundown, and we were on the southern verge of the great Kalihari waste, which is usually an arid desert, but was then like a rich meadow. In the darkness I set to work and dug a deep grave in the sand. Before we lowered the body into it, Alida drew the kaross back from the face and imprinted a long kiss upon the dead, smoothed-out brow of the man who had been for so long a father to her, and who had wearied so sorely for his death. Then she threw herself upon the ground at the grave-side and burst into passionate weeping. I placed heavy stones over the grave and burnt loose gunpowder among them for the purpose of scaring off the jackals.

‘At the first gleam of dawn we were again on our way. We knew we should be pursued, sooner or later, and I wanted to get beyond the range of pursuit so as to avoid, if possible, the necessity for shedding blood. In this there was no element of fear, for I felt strong and confident of being able to overcome the two ruffians. But I knew it would be necessary to kill them if they overtook us, and I had always shrunk from the idea of taking the life of a fellow-creature—no matter how vile—even in self-defence.

‘We had no fixed plans. Alida knew no more than I of the country before us. We were on no track, but just steered vaguely northward, taking our direction from the sun and the stars.

Water was to be found almost everywhere; besides, the whole desert was strewn with "tsamai" melons, on which we, as well as the cattle, could exist should the water fail. Game was plentiful and tame, so we never lacked meat. Each night as we camped we collected fuel, and built two large fires for the purpose of keeping off the lions, one just behind the waggon and the other in front of the team. The front yoke we used to peg down firmly, to prevent the oxen, which were tied in pairs along the chain, from rushing back on the waggon, in the event of a panic being caused by wild beasts. We divided the night into two watches, of which I took the first. The oxen were well trained, so the services of a leader were not often required, and Alida was thus enabled to sleep for long periods as the waggon crawled slowly over the velvet-like sand.

'Thus passed five days, and on the morning of the sixth old Danster turned up. He had waited for my return a day and a night, and then gone back to the homestead on my spoor, arriving on the evening of the second day after I had left him. He found the house just as we had left it, but feeling that something was wrong, had been afraid to enter, so he took cover close by and waited for daylight, when he traced the wheel-tracks of our waggon down to the river. Little Slinger, his grandson, he could not find, although he searched for him far and near. In the afternoon Piet and Gerrit arrived. Danster stole up to a bush, from which he could observe all that went on near the house. He saw the brothers moving about excitedly and gesticulating wildly. Little Slinger soon afterwards appeared; he had evidently been hiding in the bush, and emerged, driven out by starvation. The boy was seized by Gerrit and dragged into the house. He was shortly afterwards dragged out again, and then Piet shot him dead before the door.

'Danster saw the brothers drive in the mob of horses, saddle up two, and place a small pack upon a third. Then they started on the track of our waggon. Danster followed on foot, and passed the two when camped for the night. Since then he had travelled night and day to overtake us, and he only arrived just in time to give warning. I at once determined to await the approach of our pursuers, who were now so close that we could not hope to escape them. Personally, I had no doubt as to the result of the encounter. I did not want the woman I loved to stain her sinless hands in blood, be it ever so guilty, so I refused her offer of assist-

ance in the conflict. But she took a solemn oath that if I were killed she would take her own life.

‘I knew that I should inevitably have to destroy these men, but, nevertheless, I determined not to do so without having absolute proof that they meant to murder me. In the long silent watches of the recent nights, when earth lay speechless to the stars, I had thought out a plan in view of the probable contingency, and this plan I proceeded to put into execution. These men should have their chance, and if they meant anything less than absolute murder, my right hand might perish before I would slay them.

‘So I yoked the team to the waggon once more, and drew it onward for a few hundred yards to a spot where two dunes nearly met, and where the drift-sand lay loose and soft. Then I halted the waggon, letting it appear as though the oxen had been unable to draw it any farther. The oxen I unyoked and sent forward in charge of Danster, telling him, if he heard shooting, shortly followed by a shout from me, to bring them back at once.

‘Then I gathered a quantity of fuel, carefully selecting a number of logs of heavy, close-grained wood, which might be depended upon to keep alight for hours. I felt so sure that no attack would be made before dark, that I proceeded with my preparations in a most leisurely manner. We built the pile ready for kindling, but waited for sundown before setting it alight.

‘In the meantime, Alida had—under my directions—taken a couple of yokes and some pillows, and of these made dummy figures, which she dressed in some of our garments. Then I scooped out a comfortable-looking couch in the soft dune-side, close to the pile of fuel, and in the bottom of it laid a kaross. Upon this we placed the two figures, side by side, and over them we spread another kaross. Above the head of one figure was laid Alida’s “cappie,” with the hood drawn over the face as though to keep off the dew. Over the head of the other, my coat was laid in the same manner; my hat being carelessly thrown down alongside. Within arm’s reach one of my spare guns lay propped upon forked sticks, so as to keep it clear of the sand.

‘We finished our preparations just after the sun had sunk, but I afterwards added a slight touch here and there for the purpose of improving the general effect. I remember Alida clinging to my arm in terror, because, just as dusk was setting in, I returned and placed one of my pipes on top of the hat, where the metal top glinted brightly in the firelight. Then we climbed

into the waggon, let the canvas flap fall, and sat silently awaiting developments.

'The sides of the canvas cover buttoned to the woodwork of the tilt, but we unbuttoned sufficient of it to give us, when we lifted it slightly, a good view of the fire, the couch with the dummies lying in it, and a considerable space surrounding these.

'I sat in the waggon grasping my double-barrelled gun. My pulse beat no faster than usual. The only emotion I was conscious of was extreme impatience. I was not even uneasy about Danster and the cattle, although I knew there were many lions about. I was quite certain that the two human jackals would fall into the trap I had so carefully set for them, but the waiting, which lasted until after midnight, seemed long and wearisome. It was Alida who first, with the sharp ear of the desert-bred, heard their approaching stealthy steps. She grasped my arm suddenly, and I knew quite well what she meant to convey, so I noiselessly cocked both barrels of my gun. Then she lifted the edge of the canvas a few inches, and I looked cautiously out.

'Gerrit was the first to appear; he had an evil smile on his face, and his wicked black eyes glittered like sparks. Immediately following came Piet. He looked haggard, and his pale lips moved convulsively. Both men were barefoot, and without hats or boots. They had, Danster afterwards ascertained when he traced their spoor backwards for the purpose of getting their horses, watched our camp for some time from the top of a dune a few hundred yards away, and there discarded their boots and superfluous clothing before advancing to their cowardly attack.

'Gerrit leading, the two stole up to within two yards of my supposed figure, and then Piet stretched out his hand and took possession of my gun, which he placed out of reach. The two then pointed their guns, Gerrit at the head and Piet at the breast of the dummy. I noticed that both took some pains to avoid the possibility of wounding the other supposed sleeper with their shots, and for this a faint throb of something like pity woke in my mind. I saw the muzzles of the guns drop slightly in unison once, twice, and then, at the third drop, both weapons were discharged.

'I had covered Gerrit, and an instant after he fired he dropped with my bullet through his brain. Piet sprang wildly to one side, only, however, to meet my second shot, which pierced his chest from the left-hand side. He fell on his face with a gurgling groan, and died clutching wildly at the grass.

IV.

‘I sprang out of the waggon, ran to the top of the dune and shouted to old Danster, who, to my astonishment, emerged from under a bush a few yards off. He had stolen back after leaving the oxen, replete and happy, lying down about a quarter of a mile away. The old Hottentot was filled with savage delight at little Slinger’s death having been so completely avenged. He had his gun ready to shoot Piet had I fallen. Soon afterwards he brought up the oxen at a run, and we tied them to the yokes.

‘We then dragged the two bodies to the back of the dune, and there left them to such sepulture as the vultures and the jackals might give. A few spadefuls of clean white sand obliterated all superficial traces of the gruesome happenings in the vicinity of the waggon. Then Alida and I sat on the waggon-box, hand in hand, and watched until the night died and the gracious morning smiled upon the desert.

‘I felt no remorse for what I had done, then or ever afterwards. My deed had been an execution, not a murder—an act of self-defence under the direst necessity. But I preferred to look upon it as a kind of judicial proceeding in which the culprits had been tried and sentenced at the bar of eternal justice, and handed over to me, unwilling, for execution.

‘When the sweet, pure influences of dawn descended upon us after that night of blood, my heart-strings sang aloud and I thrilled with a sense of elation such as I had never previously experienced. I seemed to be king of a boundless realm, and my queen sat in beauty at my side. No word of love had passed between us since our flight, but she was now mine by every law of heaven and earth. The face of love had hitherto been shaded by terror and tears, but now it shone upon us, unclouded and bright as the morning. We were alone in the wild, untracked and boundless desert, but we would not have exchanged our waggon for a palace. To us a world of men would have been unbearable; the convulsion we had passed through had whirled us to some zone far from the ways of ordinary humanity. We were like two peerless eagles soaring in the heart of the infinite blue, forgetful of the inconspicuous earth.

‘Northward and ever northward we travelled. Wayward Nature spread a carpet for our delighted feet, and laid the fruits of the earth ready for our banquet. I felt so happy that it gave

me pain to slay the innocent desert creatures when meat was required. I knew not fear of anything. I have looked calmly into the eyes of a furious lion when he crouched ready to spring at me, and laid him quivering at my feet with a shot which seemed as though it could not err.

'We happened upon the bitter wells quite by accident. Alida took a fancy to this spot, so we here formed our camp. We never dreamt of having to depend upon the bitter water for our sustenance, for the well in the donga close at hand looked as though it could never run dry. The Bushmen soon became our fast friends. Alida spoke their language, and they used to bring their sick and hurt to her for treatment. In one or two serious cases I was called in, and, owing to the fact of fortunate recoveries resulting, I acquired the reputation of a great magician. This reputation I have never lost.

'For a year no two human beings were ever happier than we. Alida could use a gun quite as well as I, so I felt no uneasiness about leaving her alone when hunting took me far afield. The desert, after rain, is full of wholesome vegetable food, and with this the Bushmen kept us well supplied. We had no want or desire which we could not satisfy. Yes, that year was enough to atone for an eternity of pain.

'One thing only I dreaded—the possibility of Alida's becoming a mother, and at length the day came when I knew that my dream would be realised. This was just a year after our union.

'Soon afterwards the land began to dry up, and it was then I should have escaped to the Great Lake. But I was new to the climate, and I could make no guess as to what was coming. I hoped against hope for rain, but the sun scorched fiercer and fiercer. Now and then the clouds came up to mock our misery, but no drop fell from them. One by one the water-places failed, and the Bushmen began to flock in to the bitter wells from every direction. All had the same tale to tell. The desert, which had been awakened to beauty by the kiss of the fickle sky, was falling back into its ancient, death-like sleep. Until this present season it has never since re-awakened.

'The well in the donga close at hand held out long after the others had dried up, but it, too, began to show signs of soon becoming exhausted. The Bushmen still said that rain might come, and once, when the lightnings flickered on the north-eastern horizon, they held a dance to show their joy at the

prospect of a deluge. But soon afterwards the air grew cooler, with a clear sky, and then the dwellers of the desert told us to bid good-bye to hope.

'The child was born—a strong, lusty boy—and Alida stood the ordeal bravely. But the sides of our well began to crumble in, and the water to become horribly less. At length, after we had spent nearly a whole day in squeezing a single pannikin of moisture from the sand scraped up at the bottom of the pit, we sadly moved over to the bitter wells. The child was then two months old.

'Alida sickened from the water at once. Strangely enough, it had no effect upon me. Then the kind Bushmen searched all over the desert for the ostrich egg-shells which they had filled with rain-water and buried here and there so that the hunters might not die of thirst when their pursuit of game had taken them far away from their camps. This stuff, horrible as it proved, Alida was able to exist upon, but the supply soon became exhausted, and then the bitter water made her more ill than ever. Her illness poisoned the child; it wasted quickly and died in cruel pain.

'Alida never lifted her head after the child's death. By her wish I carried it over here for burial. At one time it seemed as though she might possibly become accustomed to the bitter water. Then, after unusually hot weather, its poison grew so virulent that even some of the Bushmen sickened. Alida became suddenly worse, and two days afterwards she died in my arms.

'All this happened twenty years ago. On these notched sticks I have kept a record of the slow time. Alida and the child lie buried beneath the spot where we are sitting now; I shall never leave the place. Every day the Bushmen bring me enough meat and water for my needs. Old Danster died of thirst when hunting in the desert, years ago.

'The wild animals seem to know me, for they never attempt to do me any hurt. I do not think I am unhappy, for I can sleep when I like, and in my dreams I go over the past again and again. They used to teach me that another life comes after death. I do not know. . . . I know that if the soul lives when the body dies, our souls will be together. . . . But now I dream . . . and dream . . .'

WILLIAM CHARLES SCULLY.

THE MYSTERY OF LORD BATEMAN.

IN the thirteenth volume of the biographical edition of Mr. Thackeray's works (pp. lvi. lxi.) is printed 'The Famous History of Lord Bateman,' with Thackeray's illustrations. The accomplished editor furnishes no prolegomena, or comment—wisely, because a volume could hardly contain the notes that should be written. The *Mystery of Lord Bateman* is dark, yet not wholly inscrutable.

First let us consider Mr. Thackeray's text of the ballad. It is closely affiliated to the text of 'The Loving Ballad of Lord Bateman,' whereof an early, if not the earliest, edition, with Cruikshank's illustrations, was published in 1851. The edition here used is that of David Bryce and Son, Glasgow (no date). Mr. Blanchard Jerrold, in his 'Life of Cruikshank,' tells us that the artist sang this 'old English ballad' at a dinner where Dickens and Thackeray were present. Mr. Thackeray remarked: 'I should like to print that ballad with illustrations,' but Cruikshank 'warned him off,' as he intended to do the thing himself. Dickens furnished the learned notes. This account of what occurred was given by Mr. Walter Hamilton, but Mr. Sala furnished another version. The 'authorship of the ballad,' Mr. Sala justly observed, 'is involved in mystery.' Cruikshank picked it up from the recitation of a minstrel outside a pot-house. In Mr. Sala's opinion, Mr. Thackeray 'revised and settled the words, and made them fit for publication.' Nor did he confine himself to the mere critical work; he added, in Mr. Sala's opinion, that admired passage about 'The young bride's mother, who never before was heard to speak so free,' also contributing 'The Proud Young Porter,' Jeames. Now, in fact, both the interpellation of the bride's mamma, and the person and characteristics of the proud young porter, are of unknown antiquity, and are not due to Mr. Thackeray—a scholar too conscientious to 'decorate' an ancient text. Bishop Percy did such things, and Scott is not beyond suspicion; but Mr. Thackeray, like Joseph Ritson, preferred the authentic voice of tradition. Thus, in the text of the Biographical Edition, he does not imitate the Cockney twang,

phonetically rendered in the version of Cruikshank. The second verse, for example, runs 'thus :

Cruikshank :

He sail-ed east, he sail-ed vest,
Until he came to famed Tur-key,
Vere he vos taken and put to prisin,
Until his life was quite wea-ry.

Thackeray :

He sailed East, and he sailed West,
Until he came to proud Turkey,
Where he was taken and put to prison,
Until his life was almost weary.

There are discrepancies in the arrangement of the verses, and a most important various reading.

Cruikshank :

Now sevin long years is gone and past,
And fourteen days vell known to me;
She packed up all her gay clouthin,
And swore Lord Bateman she would go see.

To this verse, in Cruikshank's book, a note (not by Cruikshank) is added :—

*" Now sevin long years is gone and past,
And fourteen days well known to me.*

In this may be recognised, though in a minor degree, the same gifted hand that portrayed the Mussulman, the pirate, the father, and the bigot, in two words (*' This Turk '*).

" The time is gone, the historian knows it, and that is enough for the reader. This is the dignity of history very strikingly exemplified."

That note to Cruikshank's text is, like all the delightful notes, undeniably not by Dickens, but by Thackeray. Yet, in his own text, with an exemplary fidelity, he reads, ' And fourteen days well known to *thee*.' To whom? We are left in ignorance; and conjecture, though tempting, is unsafe, and may be consigned to the ingenuity of Mr. Verrall. The reading of Cruikshank, ' vell known to *me*'—that is, to the poet—is confirmed by the hitherto unprinted ' Lord Bedmin.' This version, collected by Miss Wyatt Edgell in 1899, as recited by a blind old woman in a workhouse, who had learned it in her youth, now lies before the present writer. He owes this invaluable document to the kindness of Miss Wyatt Edgell and Lady Rosalind Northcote. Invaluable it is, because it proves that Lord Bateman (or Bedmin) is really a *volkslied*, a

popular and current version of the ancient ballad. 'Famed Turkey' becomes 'Torquay' in this text, probably by a misapprehension on the part of the collector. The speech of the bride's mother is here omitted, though it occurs in older texts; but, on the whole, the blind old woman's memory has proved itself excellent. In one place she gives Thackeray's reading in preference to that of Cruikshank's, thus:—

Cruikshank :

Ven he vent down on his bended knee,

Thackeray :

Down on his bended knees fell he.

Old Woman :

Down on his bended knee fell he.

We have now ascertained the following facts: Cruikshank and Thackeray used a text with merely verbal differences, which was popular among the least educated classes early in this century. Again, Thackeray contributed the notes and critical apparatus to Cruikshank's version. For this the internal evidence of style is overpowering: no other man wrote in the manner and with the peculiar humour of Mr. Titmarsh. In the humble opinion of the present writer these Notes ought to be appended to Mr. Thackeray's version of 'Lord Bateman.' Finally, Mr. Sala was wrong in supposing that Mr. Thackeray took liberties with the text received from oral tradition.

What was the origin of that text? Professor Child, in the second part of his 'English and Scottish Popular Ballads' (vol. ii. p. 454 *et seq.*, and in various other places) lays before us the learning about Lord Bateman, Lord Bedmin, Young Bicham, Young Brechin, Young Bekie, Young Beichan and Susie Pie (the heroine, Sophia, in Thackeray), Lord Beichan, Young Bondwell, and Markgraf Backenweil; for by all these names is Lord Bateman known. The student must carefully note that 'Thackeray's List of Broad-sides,' cited, is *not* by Mr. W. M. Thackeray.

As the reader may not remember the incidents in the Thackeray, Cruikshank and Old Woman version (which represents an ancient ballad, now not so much popularised as vulgarised), a summary may be given. Lord Bateman went wandering: 'his character, at this time, and his expedition, would seem to have borne a striking resemblance to those of Lord Byron. . . . Some foreign country he wished to see, and that was the extent of his desire; any foreign country would answer his purpose—all foreign

countries were alike to him'—(W. M. T. *apud* Cruikshank). Arriving in Turkey (or Torquay) he was taken and fastened to a tree by his captor. He was furtively released by the daughter of 'This Turk.' 'The poet has here, by that bold license which only genius can venture upon, surmounted the extreme difficulty of introducing any particular Turk, by assuming a foregone conclusion in the reader's mind; and adverting, in a casual, careless way, to a Turk hitherto unknown as to an old acquaintance. . . . "This Turk he had" is a master-stroke, a truly Shakspearian touch'—(W. M. T.) The lady, in her father's cellar ('Castle,' Old Woman's text), consoles the captive with 'the very best wine,' secretly stored, for his private enjoyment, by the cruel and hypocritical Mussulman. She confesses the state of her heart, and inquires as to Lord Bateman's real property, which is 'half Northumberland.' To what period in the complicated history of the earldom of Northumberland the affair belongs is uncertain.

The pair vow to be celibate for seven years, and Lord Bateman escapes. At the expiral of the period, Sophia sets out for Northumberland, urged, perhaps, by some telepathic admonition. For, on arriving at Lord Bateman's palace (Alnwick Castle?), she summons the proud porter, announces herself, and finds that her lover has just celebrated a marriage with another lady. In spite of the remonstrances of the bride's mama, Lord Bateman restores the young lady to her family, observing

She is neither the better nor the worse for me.

So Thackeray and Old Woman. Cruikshank prudishly reads,

O you'll see what I'll do for you and she.

'Lord Bateman then prepared another marriage, having plenty of superfluous wealth to bestow upon the Church'—(W. M. T.) All the rest was bliss.

The reader may ask: How did Sophia know anything about the obscure Christian captive? *Why* did she leave home exactly in time for his marriage? How came Lord Bateman to be so fickle? Thackeray replies, 'His lordship had doubtless been impelled by despair of ever recovering his lost Sophia, and a natural anxiety not to die without leaving an heir to his estate.' Finally, how was the difficulty of Sophia's religion overcome?

To all these questions the Cockney version gives no reply, but

the older forms of the ballad offer sufficient, though varying answers, as we shall see.

Meanwhile one thing is plain from this analysis of the pot-house version of an old ballad, namely that the story is constructed out of fragments from the great universal store of popular romance. The central ideas are two: first, the situation of a young man in the hands of a cruel captor (often a god, a giant, a witch, a fiend), but here—a Turk. The youth is loved and released (commonly through magic spells) by the daughter of the gaoler, god, giant, witch, Turk, or what not. In Greece, Jason is the Lord Bateman, Medea is the Sophia, of the tale, which was known to Homer and Hesiod, and was fully narrated by Pindar. *The other young person*, the second bride, however, comes in differently, in the Greek. In far-off Samoa, a god is the captor (Turner's 'Samoa,' p. 102). The gaoler is a magician in Red Indian versions.¹

As a rule, in these tales, from Finland to Japan, from Samoa to Madagascar, Greece and India, the girl accompanies her lover in his flight, delaying the pursuer by her magic. In 'Lord Bateman' another formula, almost as widely diffused, is preferred.

The old true love comes back just after her lover's wedding. He returns to her. Now, as a rule, in popular tales, the lover's fickleness is explained by a spell or by a breach of a taboo. The old true love has great difficulty in getting access to him, and in waking him from a sleep, drugged or magical.

The bloody shirt I wrang for thee,
The Hill o' Glass I clamb for thee,
And wilt thou no waken and speak to me?

He wakens at last, and all is well. In a Romaic ballad the deserted girl, meeting her love on his wedding-day, merely reminds him of old kindness. He answers—

Now he that will may scatter nuts,
And he may wed that will,
But she that was my old true love,
Shall be my true love still.

This incident, the strange, often magically caused oblivion of the lover, whose love returns to him, like Sophia, at, or after, his

¹ For a list, though an imperfect one, of the Captor's daughter story, see the Author's *Custom and Myth*, pp. 86-102.

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marriage, is found in popular tales of Scotland, Norway, Iceland, Germany, Italy, Greece, and the Gaelic Western Islands. It does not occur in 'Lord Bateman,' where Mr. Thackeray finds probable reasons for Lord Bateman's fickleness. But the world-wide incidents are found in older versions of 'Lord Bateman,' from which they have been expelled by the English genius for the commonplace.

Thus, if we ask, how did Sophia know of Bateman's existence? it is because she overhears a song which he sings about his unlucky condition. This occurs in *Young Bekie* (Scottish: mark the name, *Bekie*), where France is the scene and the king's daughter is the lady. The same formula of the song sung by the prisoner is usual. Not uncommon, too, is a *token* carried by Sophia to insure her recognition. It is half of her broken ring. Once more, why does Sophia leave home to find Bateman in the very nick of time? Thackeray's version does not tell us; but Scottish versions do. 'She longed fu' sair her love to see.' Elsewhere a supernatural being, 'The Billy Blin,' or a fairy, clad in green, gives her warning. The fickleness of the hero is caused, sometimes, by constraint, another noble 'has his marriage,' as his feudal superior, and makes him marry, but only in form.

There is a marriage in yonder hall,
Has lasted thirty days and three,
The bridegroom winna bed the bride,
For the sake o' one that's owre the sea.

In this Scottish version, by the way, occurs—

Up spoke the young bride's mother,
Who never was heard to speak so free,

wrongly attributed to Mr. Thackeray's own pen.

The incident of the magical oblivion which comes over the bridegroom occurs in Scandinavian versions of 'Lord Bateman' from manuscripts of the sixteenth century.¹ Finally, the religious difficulty in several Scottish versions is got over by the conversion and baptism of Sophia. All these unsolved problems in 'Lord Bateman,' then, are the results of decay. The modern vulgar English version of the pot-house minstrel (known as 'The Tripe Skewer,' according to Thackeray) has forgotten, has been heedless of, and dropped the ancient universal elements of folk-tale and folk-song.

¹ Child, ii. 459-461.

These graces, it is true, are too conspicuous even in the oldest and best versions of 'Lord Bateman.' Choosing at random, however, we find a Scots version open thus :

In the lands where Lord Beichan was born,
Among the stately steps o' stane,
He wore the goud at his left shoulder,
But to the Holy Land he's gane.

That is not in the tone of the ditty sung by the Tripe Skewer. Again, in his prison,

He made na his moan to a stock,
He made na it to a stone,
But it was to the Queen of Heaven
That he made his moan.

The verse is from a version of the North of Scotland, and, on the face of it, is older than the extirpation of the Catholic faith in the loyal North. The reference to Holy Land preserves a touch of the Crusading age. In short, poor as they may be, the Scottish versions are those of a people not yet wholly vulgarised, not yet lost to romance. The singers have half remembered and half forgot the legend of Gilbert Becket (Bekie, Beichan), the father of St. Thomas of Canterbury. Gilbert, in the legend, went to Holy Land, was cast into a Saracen's prison, and won his daughter's heart. He escaped, but the lady followed him, like Sophia, and, like Sophia, found and wedded him; Gilbert's servant, Richard, playing the part of the proud young porter. Yet, as Professor Child justly observes, the ballad 'is not derived from the legend,' though the legend as to Gilbert Becket exists in a manuscript of about 1300. The Bateman motive is older than Gilbert Becket, and has been attached to later versions of the adventures of that hero. Gilbert Becket about 1300 was credited with a floating, popular tale of the Bateman sort, and out of his legend, thus altered, the existing ballads drew their 'Bekie' and 'Beichan,' from the name of Becket.

The process is: First, the popular tale of the return of the old, true love; that tale is found in Greece, Scandinavia, Denmark, Iceland, Färöa, Spain, Germany, and so forth. Next, about 1300 Gilbert Becket is made the hero of the tale. Next, our surviving ballads retain a trace or two of the Becket form, but they are not derived from the Becket form. The fancy of the folk first evolved the situations in the story, then lent them to written literature (Becket's legend, 1300), and, thirdly, received

the story back from written legend with a slight, comparatively modern colouring.

In the dispute as to the origin of our ballads one school, as Mr. T. F. Henderson and Professor Courthope, regard them as *débris* of old literary romances, ill-remembered work of professional minstrels. That there are ballads of this kind in England, such as the Arthurian ballads, I do not deny. But in my opinion the ballads and popular tales are in origin older than the mediæval romances, as a rule. As a rule the romances are based on earlier popular *data*, just as the 'Odyssey' is an artistic whole made up out of popular tales. The folk may receive back a literary form of its own ballad or story, but more frequently the popular ballad comes down in oral tradition side by side with its educated child, the literary romance on the same theme. Mr. Henderson has answered that the people is unpoetical. The degraded populace of the slums may be unpoetical, like the minstrel named 'Tripe Skewer,' and may deprave the ballads of its undegraded ancestry into such modern English forms as 'Lord Bateman.' But I think of the people which, in Barbour's day, had its choirs of peasant girls chanting rural ballads on Bruce's victories, or, in still earlier France, of Roland's overthrow. If *their* songs are attributed to professional minstrels, I turn to the Greece of 1830, to the Finland of to-day, to the outermost Hebrides of to-day, to the Arapahoes of Northern America, to the Australian blacks, among all of whom the people are their own poets and make their own dirges, lullabies, chants of victory, and laments for defeat. *These* peoples are not unpoetical. In fact, when I say that the people has been its own poet I do not mean the people which goes to music-halls and reads halfpenny newspapers. To the true folk we owe the legend of Lord Bateman in its ancient germs; and to the folk's degraded modern estate, crowded as men are in noisome streets and crushed by labour, we owe the Cockney depravation, the Lord Bateman of Cruikshank and Thackeray. Even that, I presume, being old, is now forgotten, except by the ancient blind woman in the workhouse. To the workhouse has come the native popular culture—the last lingering shadow of old romance. That is the moral of the ballad of Lord Bateman.

In an article by Mr. Kitton, in *Literature* (June 24, 1899, p. 699), this learned Dickensite says: 'The authorship of this version' (Cruikshank's) 'of an ancient ballad and of the accompanying

notes has given rise to much controversy, and whether Dickens or Thackeray was responsible for them is still a matter of conjecture, although what little evidence there is seems to favour Thackeray.'

For the ballad neither Thackeray nor Dickens is responsible. The Old Woman's text settles that question: the ballad is a degraded *Volkslied*. As to the notes, internal evidence, for once, is explicit. The notes are Thackeray's. Any one who doubts has only to compare Thackeray's notes to his prize poem on 'Timbuctoo.'

ANDREW LANG.

*MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF YESTERDAY
AND TO-DAY.*

BY ONE OF THE OLD SCHOOL.

IT is surely rather a strange thing that the progress of refinement of habits and customs, with all the facilities and luxuries of life which the new discoveries of science and industry are perpetually pouring in upon us, should be accompanied, in this England of ours, by a decline—not to say a decay—of manners. Not only *les belles manières* of old, but that touch of ceremonial which hedges in the dignity of the individual and marks his place, be he nobleman or peasant, are so rapidly becoming a thing of the past that before long they will have joined letter-writing, and other pleasant minor arts, in the limbo of old-fashioned and forgotten things.

By manners William of Wykeham no doubt meant the word in its fullest acceptation as an outward sign of inward grace, the shining of a beautiful soul through the 'ivory lantern' of the body, the innate nobility that translates itself in perfect courtesy, and of which there are never wanting examples, under all the accidents of time and place, through all the changeful centuries. But a plea may perhaps be made for those acquired manners, those little observances of courtesy and respect, which are so fast disappearing, and the eclipse of which must be a loss to any society or country.

In one of the delightful letters of Dorothy Osborne to Sir William Temple, written in 1653, she is describing to her lover a great quarrel she has had with her elder brother, who was violently opposed to Sir William's suit and anxious to promote that of some other pretender to his sister's hand. She concludes: 'We talked ourselves weary. He renounced me, and I defied him—but both in as civil language as it would permit—and parted in great anger, with the usual ceremony of a leg and a courtesy, that you would have died with laughing to see us.' Elsewhere she alludes to the 'legs and courtesies' that pass between them, showing that even among brothers and sisters there was an etiquette of manners, which in these days—when a

cursory nod morning and evening is generally considered sufficient salutation, and brothers and sisters at other times do not take much more notice of each other's presence, in the matter of etiquette, than so many sheep grazing in the same field—gives one almost the impression of reading of the inhabitants of some other planet, that an interview, even a stormy one, could not pass without the pretty preliminary and conclusion of a bow and of a courtesy!

In a previous letter Dorothy gives us another little side-light on the manners of the time, when, speaking of a visit to a country neighbour, she says: 'As I came back I met a coach with some company in't that I knew, and thought myself obliged to salute. We all 'lighted and met, and I found more than I looked for by two damsels and their squires.' So, if a lady, two hundred years ago, thought herself obliged to salute the occupants of a passing carriage, it meant nothing less than all alighting into the road—and what a road!—for the observance of the ceremony. This usage may explain why, in nearly all the pictures of the time in which a carriage is introduced, the 'company in't' has alighted and is saluting the occupants of some other coach advancing to meet it. A last survival of this etiquette lingered in Rome until 1870; a cardinal meeting the Pope out driving had to alight and salute him. The wags had it that such an encounter was generally followed by the dismissal of the cardinal's coachman.

The fine reticence of style of Dorothy's letters accords with the dignity of manners; they begin 'Sir,' and end 'your faithful friend and humble servant,' and towards the end of their long courtship: 'Dear, I am yours,' or simply 'yours.' It is only in the one letter extant, written to her husband from The Hague, that we find her beginning 'My dearest heart,' and ending 'I am my best dear's most affectionate D. T.' Her affection seldom betrays itself in a warmer phrase than when she writes describing her days at Chicksands: 'When I have supped I go into the garden, and so to the side of a small river that runs by it, when I sit down and wish you were with me (you had best say this is not kind neither). In earnest, 'tis a pleasant place, and would be much more so to me if I had your company.' And yet she was a very Penelope of constancy, waiting seven years for her absent lover, and refusing suitor after suitor, among them Henry Cromwell, the Protector's son, and nobly keeping the word she writes in one of her letters: 'The wealth of the whole world, by the grace of God,

shall not tempt me to break my word with you, nor the importunity of all my friends I have.'

England, less fortunate than France, has no national theatre to carry on the tradition of the manners and customs of bygone days. At the Théâtre Français, the 'Maison de Molière' as it proudly calls itself, those traditions have been handed down in an unbroken succession; and when we sit and watch the *Précieuses Ridicules* or the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* live again before us, independently of the play itself, we see in the dresses, deportment and manners of the actors, the very image and counterpart, not only of those of Molière and his fellow-players, but of the men and women whom he took as models for his *Elmires* and *Valères*, his *Harpagons* and *Frosines*. Taking off the hat was an action in several movements, as anyone who has taken part in private theatricals in France will remember to his cost—the exact part of the turned-up brim on the left side to be taken hold of, the circular sweep of arm and hat, bringing the latter to the front of the breast, &c. And in this mirror we see the very etiquette with which our ancestresses stood still; no lady's arms hung loosely down; the elbows clung closely to her sides, and the hands just touched each other in front of her waist. They must have done a good deal of standing on the whole, especially the younger ones, if we remember that in the presence of anyone of superior age or rank, they had to stand until bidden to sit down.

There is a scene in *L'Avare* where the whole company goes out to take an airing, and we see how each lady is handed out according to her rank, the hand held at full stretch aloft, in a manner which only survives now in the handing of a royal bride to and from the altar. Nor must we forget to notice the bit of by-play, when *Frosine*, the *femme d'intrigue*, coming last, holds up her hand to one of the gentlemen, who turns on his heel with a laugh; so, with an angry flounce she walks out by herself—not being of quality sufficient to be escorted.

Coming to a time nearer to our own, Jane Austen gives us more perfectly, perhaps, than any other authority, the exact picture of the manners of her day. The pompous elaboration of an earlier age has given place to a courtliness of bearing which finds expression in the simplest usages of society. Her young ladies never 'go with' nor even 'accompany' their mothers or chaperons to a ball, or into the country, or on an airing, but invariably 'attend them,' and there is a world of deference and

subserviency expressed in the little world. So the gentlemen always 'wait upon' those, especially the ladies, whom they visit; and even timid little Fanny Price, at seventeen, has learned how, on occasion, 'to submit to being the principal lady in company, and to all the little distinctions consequent thereon.' This etiquette and the graceful dignity of the dances then in vogue, must have made a ball-room, with its measured minuets and *contredanses*, as couple after couple went through their parts, a scene which would be a refreshment and delight to the dizzy crowds which hustle and bump each other in the crush of a modern ball.

It is also interesting to notice, in these days when women, in more than one sense of the word, walk alone, how they were accustomed to lean upon the nearest masculine arm within their reach. Even in strolling through the gardens, when the Bertrams went to Sotherton, Edmund Bertram is made happy by Miss Crawford taking one arm whilst his cousin Fanny is leaning on the other.

A gentleman of the old school said some years ago:—'When I was young, two gentlemen meeting in the street, took off their hats and bowed to each other; a few years later, and the bow had ceased; then came a time when they merely touched the brims of their hats; and now a jerk of the chin and a little grunt—"h'm, h'm," is considered sufficient salutation between two men of quality and fashion.' The habit of remaining uncovered in the presence of ladies died hard, but it is a good many years since the late Lord D—— was conspicuous as the only man who always stood bare-headed in the crush-room of the Opera. 'Mesdames,' said an old lady, some fifty years ago, in reply to some complaints upon the changes in men's manners, 'vous êtes descendues de votre piédestal le jour où vous avez permis aux messieurs de fumer devant vous.' She little thought that in the days of the granddaughters of the women whom she was upbraiding, the smoking-room would be common to both sexes, and the very idea of standing on a pedestal almost a subject of derision.

If we may judge by the courteous bearing and exquisite urbanity of many of the old people who were ornaments to society some twenty years ago, we should be tempted to say that manners must have been at their best in the first quarter of this century; unless we are to think that the courtliness which charmed us was one of the virtues of old age, like the greater

indulgence and kindness, and other fruits of the experiences of life, which are among the attributes of the old. It is, alas! more likely that their polished manners were the survival of habits acquired in youth, and that there is but little hope that the manners of the present generation will—like wine—improve as they get older.

One boisterous day last winter, some ladies in Paris were complaining of the unpleasantness of getting about, and that men were not as obliging as might be wished in the matter of giving way in tramcars, &c. 'Well, I always do,' said a gentleman present. 'Oh, but you are eighty years of age,' was the instant reply, with a smile and little bow of graceful homage.

It once happened to the writer to be present, within the same fortnight, at a giving of prizes at a village flower-show, and at an important college in a great northern town. In the first instance, the villagers shambled up awkwardly enough to receive their awards at the hands of the charming lady who distributed them; but then, as, one after another, they expressed their acknowledgments by the time-honoured salute of touching their heads, some doing it with military precision, others with rather a grand wave of the hand, while others again pulled their forelock, the trifling ceremony, elementary as it was, repeated thirty or forty times, had something impressive and almost touching—as old as the hills, as universal as the world, one felt it to be—in its fine significance of humbling the head in token of deference, submission, or thanks. In the second case, the progress of the successful candidates from their places to the platform and back again was altogether deplorable; and, as the diplomas passed from the hands of the President into theirs, the young ladies and young gentlemen seemed unable to make any other sign of acknowledgment than a kind of jerky nod; one could not but wonder why, among the acquirements for which they were being rewarded, had not been included the simple and most advantageous art of walking a few steps with ease, and making a bow or a courtesy, according to their sex.

No other European country is quite so badly off as we are in this respect: the universality of military service, for one thing, leaves behind it a certain aptitude for disciplined movements and falling into line when occasion requires, which would make such a *fiasco* impossible, if one may say so without treason to the dignity of Parliament, as was that progress of the Members of

the House of Commons to Buckingham Palace, in the wake of the Speaker, during the Jubilee festivities, two years ago. Setting aside the inborn gracefulness of the Spaniards and Italians, most continental nations are accustomed, from their childhood, to take part in organised movements with precision and a certain amount of ceremonial; who has not noticed with what delightful dignity little children of all ranks take part in the processions on feast-days and other solemnities of the Church in Belgium or France? Norway and Sweden and most northern countries retain something of the manners of a former time, and, when she visits our shores, the little courtesy with which a Swedish young lady will leave the room, leaves a kind of ray of sunshine behind it across our stolid immovability.

'The decline of good manners is the fault of the women,' is the often-repeated accusation, and it may be that their intrusion into so many domains which were formerly reserved to men, their abandonment or relaxation of many of the rules of *bienséance* which formerly prevailed, may have had a large share of responsibility in the changed order of things. But the causes alleged have been as multifarious as the results, and their enumeration would be as tedious as, in many instances, the remedies would be unobtainable, ranging as they do from the numerical superiority of the gentle sex and the changes in the marriage laws, down to the newest caprice of fashion on the part of the women, and the greater indolence of habit in the men, bred by the very excess of the modern appliances for the promotion of ease, and the saving of exertion and trouble.

It is said that there is a reaction against the excessive *sans-gêne* of manners that was the rule three or four years ago; that the lament of the ball-giving hostess has at last got a hearing, and that there is a return to the civilities of former days in the matter of answering invitations and paying duty-calls. Perhaps, in time, it will cease to be considered within the limits of tolerated manners for gilded youths to arrive at supper-time, where the *cuisine* is known to be good, and to leave the house again without taking the trouble to go upstairs and make their bow to their hostess.

If, turning aside from the question of manners, we take the most cursory survey of the refinements of life nowadays, as compared with the beginning of the century, the improvement is so great as to be hardly credible; and the puzzling paradox strikes us anew, why the manners of society should not only not have

shared in the general progress, but have even retrograded—unless it be conceded that gain and loss must always go together, and that every step in advance must be compensated for in some way or another. Our adaptability is so great, we accustom ourselves so readily to an improved condition of life, in spite of all its incidental drawbacks, that we find it hard to realise with what strides the customs and habits of our race have advanced along the path of progress, or how different were the lives of our fathers, and still more of our grandfathers, in these respects.

What we gain in utility we almost always lose in beauty and in picturesqueness; but with regard to all the refinements of habit conveyed in the words cleanliness, sanitation, and facility of locomotion, the small shopkeeper, the mechanic, the very peasant of to-day is better off than were princes and noblemen seventy or eighty years ago. That little bathroom of poor Queen Marie Antoinette at the Trianon must have been almost as much an object of curiosity, for its singularity in her day, as it is now for its associations; and certain it is that in all those vast piles of buildings at Versailles, with all their gorgeous magnificence, bathrooms were an unknown quantity.

According to some authorities, Louis XIV. never washed—a little cold-cream applied with a cambric handkerchief serving instead. This—let us hope—was a calumny, but in St.-Simon's minute and detailed account of the monarch's day, from the handing-in of his periwig through the closed bed-curtains in the morning, until several dukes and marquises had handed the royal night-*chemise* to each other, the highest in rank placing it on the royal shoulders; and his chaplain, kneeling at a *prie-dieu* at the foot of the bed, had said his night-prayers for him, no mention is made of any ablutions, except that he was shaved every other day.

Madame de Carette, in her *Souvenirs*, gives a curious account of the state of the Tuileries under the Second Empire; the splendour of the state apartments in strange contrast with the discomfort and darkness of the interior of the palace; narrow windowless corridors and staircases, with no ventilation and lighted with lamps both night and day; the consequent heat and oppressiveness becoming quite painful with the first return of spring, and making the whole household sigh for the signal of departure for St. Cloud or Fontainebleau.

Quite recently, writing in 'Collections and Recollections' on the amelioration of the conditions of life during the past half-

century, Mr. Russell quoted the report of Sir Robert Rawlinson, the sanitary expert, on the state of Windsor Castle after the Prince Consort's death. He told of drains of the worst description; of no less than forty-eight cesspools beneath the basement; of windows, even in the Royal apartments, of which only the lower casements could be opened; of 'vitiating air, comparatively stagnant.' If this was the condition of things in the two chief palaces of the world less than forty years ago, the mind is left free to conjecture how common mortals were contented to live.

Perhaps nothing has had a larger share in modifying the habits of the people than the development since the beginning of the century of the methods of travel. Who, having once read, can ever forget the graphic description De Quincey gives in his 'Memoirs' of the state of the highroads of England in the days of his youth, before the advent of MacAdam? Never before or since were ruts so eloquently described—except, perhaps, by sprightly Fanny Burney, in her 'Diary' of 1778: 'The roads were so *sidelum* and *jumblum*, as Miss L. called those of Teignmouth, that I expected an overturn every minute. Safely, however, we reached the Sussex Hotel at Tunbridge Wells.' Compare, too, 'Tom Brown's' first journey to Rugby, in the days when coaching was at its best, with the same journey as accomplished by our schoolboys of to-day. There must have been an exhilaration, a sense of healthy effort and of a *fait accompli*, at that journey's end, which are perforce absent now. A charming old lady sometimes recounts how she and her sister once went from Woolwich to Manchester to spend the Christmas holidays. The coach was delayed three weeks in London by the snow, and then there were but *eight* passengers. The journey took four days, the coach toiling between two banks of snow heaped high in crisp and dazzling whiteness on either side of the road, and the whole country seemed transfigured. What a welcome the two young sisters received at their journey's end, and how the holidays, so hardly won, were enjoyed, the accents with which the story was told, after sixty years had passed, were enough to prove.

In sharp contrast with this disposition of mind were the humours of the young lady of to-day who hesitated to spend Easter in Rome until it was made certain that she could have a *wagon-toilette* to herself for the whole journey. 'When I first went to Rome,' exclaimed a woman thirty years her senior, 'if I

had been told I must walk, I think I should have made the attempt.' It is possible that, in obedience to some law of compensation, the very excess of well-being carries its own counterpoise with it—that good too easily and instantly attained loses half its savour—and that

'Tis expectation makes the blessing dear.

In few of our social customs has there been a greater change—in some senses an improvement—during this half-century than in the relation between master and servant: a change expressed by the almost universal substitution of the word 'employer' for that of 'master'; and it is the rare exception to hear master or mistress spoken of otherwise than as 'Mr.' or 'Mrs. —.' The maid servants are not advancing so rapidly in this social equalisation as the men servants; but the day is perhaps not far distant when they will desire to be known, as in America, by the title of 'living-out girl.' In some of our great northern manufacturing towns the entire female population of the working class seems by a tacit consent to have pronounced a vow of *non serviam*, so far as domestic service is concerned. That ancient and honourable profession, possessing its own dignity and prerogatives ever since the days when a little Jewish handmaiden stood before Naaman's wife and spoke wise words of counsel productive of the greatest good to all whom they concerned, is now despised by every little girl who has passed the 'sixth standard' and has to begin to earn her bread. This action on the part of the women has the disadvantage to themselves of depriving them of the more refined habits which a few years of domestic service leave behind them, and which make it easy to distinguish the ex-servant among working-men's wives; while it may, if ever the supply which still flows in from the country districts to fill up the void they have created receives a check, produce some curious changes in the social economy of those towns.

Legislation, and the developments of habits, have tended to make the servant of to-day a kind of human machine—silent, impassible, and, so far as his employer is concerned, an automaton, articulated to perform certain acts at certain times and in certain ways, with as much regularity as it is possible to obtain. There is not even the '*Bon jour, monsieur*,' or the '*Guten Tag*' spoken of a morning to establish a little link of humanity between them, and the question is, if this state of things is altogether a gain?

What was the servant of a hundred years ago is graphically told us by J. de Norvins in his 'Mémorial,' a book which contains a fund of interesting detail as to the life in French châteaux before the Revolution. He says that the *valets de chambre* still much resembled those of Molière, Dancourt, and Marivaux; that they looked upon themselves as part of the family, and were on a footing of familiarity which occasionally included traits of great impertinence on the one side, corrected by the administration of a caning on the other, without the mutual good understanding being disturbed. 'On les châtaient et on les gardait.' They were intelligent, devoted, and impudent, and were expected to be good hairdressers and barbers, to be able to read, write, and carry the post. At the Château de Brienne, where de Norvins, nephew to Comte Loménie de Brienne, was a familiar guest, there were five of these valets, who were all, moreover, good shots, good billiard-players, and excellent amateur actors! The Comte de Brienne himself was admirable in the *Bourru Bienfaisant* and in the *Misanthrope*, and his old valet took Prévile's parts with great distinction, and was a capital *Michaut* in the *Partie de Chasse* to his master's *Henri IV.* The distinctions of class were then so marked, that no one thought of there being any derogation in such familiar intercourse.

Of one of these valets, by name Duval, who remained faithful to the family through the Revolution, and died at the age of eighty in the service of a collateral relation, an amusing anecdote was told by his first master, the Marquis de Loménie. Arriving late one evening at a party, the Marquis was astonished to see in the crowd a gentleman wearing a superb court dress, identical with one his tailor had brought home that morning, and which he intended to wear at the Queen's next card-party. Even the sword and shoulder-knots, the diamond knee and shoe buckles, were faithful duplicates of his own, and what added to his curiosity was the fact that the individual's back was always turned to him as they made their way through the rooms. At last he was able to touch the man on the arm, and discovered his own valet, Duval, who uttered a careless 'Ah, bon soir, marquis!' and then in his ear: 'Do not betray me, Monsieur le Marquis; I will go away—but, all the same, I was going to marry the daughter of the house!' 'Rascal!' was his master's answer. It turned out that he had assumed the title of Marquis Du Val, of Champagne, and he had caught the young lady's fancy and

dazzled her parents with his good looks and manners, with the elegance of appearance borrowed from his master's wardrobe, and the graceful ease with which he lost and won his money at the card-table. The Marquis forgave the escapade, on condition he never set foot again in his friend's house. 'Eh bien, monsieur le marquis, I will remain a bachelor!'

Another anecdote was of a graver kind. The Comte de Brienne, talking of the violence of some masters towards their servants, said that on one occasion, having corrected his valet for some grave dereliction of duty, he had forgotten the matter when, the next morning, while shaving him, the man suddenly held the razor to his throat, saying: 'Whose turn is it to-day, Monsieur le Comte?' 'A moi toujours; continue,' was the calm reply. 'He finished shaving me, and we were mutually pleased with each other'; but relations became somewhat strained after such an incident, and the Comte gave him a hundred louis and his dismissal. 'Never beat your servants, young men,' he concluded; 'your lives are at their mercy, and you would find it hard, as I did, to owe it to one of them.'

The Comte de Brienne, together with his three adopted sons, was guillotined on May 10, 1794.

MISS SOPHIA'S PRESCRIPTION.

I.

THE LOSING OF IT.

MISS SOPHIA DREW had risen at five, as was customary with her on a Monday, and had plodded through her usual weekly washing.

She had restrained her feelings with an iron hand until the two collars and one pair of cuffs, which were her weekly allowance, had been duly clear starched and rolled up in a towel for to-morrow's ironing.

'And now,' she said, pausing on her way upstairs to take a look round her tiny parlour, 'I don't mind owning, just to myself, that I feels terrible middling.'

Her eyes rested longingly on the solitary easy-chair, which, for more than thirty years, had shivered under its narrow strip of crocheted antimacassar, and stretched out lean arms towards the cold hearth.

'Maybe a bit of fire would take away the musty smell,' said Miss Sophia, sniffing here and there about the room; 'but dear, dear! whoever heard tell of a fire in the parlour and October not half out!'

Nevertheless, before the autumn day had darkened half a dozen sportive flames leaped up the narrow chimney, and Miss Drew, with a shawl drawn closely about her shoulders, leaned back in the easy chair and resigned herself.

'For thirty years,' she soliloquised, 'I've lived in this village, always aiming to be a burning light in the midst of darkness. I've visited them as was "under the rod," and warned them of judgment to come, and now, if I'm to be chastised myself, I must look for the cause.'

She indulged in no useless longing for the company of a fellow-creature, but, as the night darkened about her, a vague sense of duty stirred within her, and she reached down the rose-wood tea-caddy from the mantelpiece, and searched diligently among its varied contents.

'This,' she said presently, as she drew forth a slip of paper, carefully preserved since the days when she had been housekeeper

for old Squire Powley, 'will do me more good than all the new-fangled medicines put together, if only that giggling young doctor, whose face I can't abear, has the gumption to mix it right. I'll watch for William Tarry, anyway, and get him to go for it before bedtime.'

It was not long before a remarkably heavy footstep announced William's approach, and Miss Sophia attracted his attention by a sharp rapping at her window. William was tall and angular, his uncouth features were singularly devoid of expression, and his slowness of speech and movement were proverbial in the village, where, however, he commanded a certain amount of respect as having been 'the doctor's man' ever since young Gilbert Lyall came home from college and the hospitals and set up for himself.

'I've never trusted anybody but old Robinson, of Winterby, to make up this prescription,' said Miss Sophia, as she solemnly handed out an unsealed envelope, 'but if your master *can* do it I should be glad of it to-night.'

'I've never knowed him beat,' returned William with a wide grin.

'Tell him,' said Miss Sophia, 'that Squire Powley paid three guineas for that prescription. And make it plain that he isn't to call. I don't want bills running up for nothing.'

William thrust the envelope into a capacious pocket, and Miss Sophia, already suspicious of his reliability, retreated to her parlour, and watched until the usual ruddy gleam issued from his doorway, and a trio of youngsters seized him by the legs.

'Suffy Drew's bad,' he observed laconically to his wife. 'She's give me a three-guinea prescription to get made up.'

'Let's see it,' said Emma, suddenly interested.

William, as in duty bound, produced the envelope, and Emma drew forth the paper and scanned it dubiously.

'It's all wrote foreign,' she said. 'I can't make a word out.'

'Let me see it, mother; oh, do!' cried Lottie, the eldest girl; and the slip of paper went the round of the small, eager-eyed family, while the elders discussed Miss Sophia.

'Now Lottie,' said Emma presently, 'you set down that paper this minute, and run to the back door with this saucepan. What's the good wasting time over that?'

Lottie obeyed, alas! too literally. She laid the envelope upon the old bureau, placed the paper above it, and made a sudden rush for the back door, through which, as it opened, the autumn wind

entered with a merry whirl, and, having set all available draperies a-flapping, seized the slip of paper, bore it jauntily to the floor, and thence, by easy stages, to the inmost corner of the recess beneath the bureau.

II.

VAIN APOLOGIES.

'HERE you be, sir, and I hope as how you'll be able to tackle it,' said William, with the freedom born of long service.

'You've brought the wrong one,' said the doctor, as he ran his finger from end to end of the envelope. 'This is empty.'

'Bless my soul, sir, it can't have flew away out of sheer aggerwation,' said William, fumbling excitedly in his pockets; 'and it can't have shook itself out in my other jacket pocket, sir. I'll go home and see, however.'

The subterfuge was transparent, for the jacket had not been changed since noon.

'It must certainly be found at once,' said the doctor, with severity.

'I'll be back with it just in twenty minutes, sir,' replied William, and escaped forthwith from the surgery.

Returning swiftly to his cottage, he inaugurated a domestic upheaval such as had never before shaken the foundations of his family circle. High and low, on hands and knees, on chairs and table-tops, in every drawer and corner of the bureau, in tins and boxes which had not been opened for weeks, and in the case of the American clock, he and his wife and all the children searched for the prescription with a desperation worthy of the cause.

When a full hour had elapsed, William propped his weary and perspiring frame against the bureau, and launched a tornado of wrath at Emma.

'I'll give it up,' he roared. 'A body might every bit as well look for a needle in a haystack. Such a place as this is, and such a 'ooman at the head on't, the curiousest, pryingest 'ooman as ever was; a 'ooman always a-wanting to make everybody's business her business. This all comes o' being married, this does. What did you want to see it at all for?' he resumed in a slightly cooler tone, the sound of a broken sob having penetrated his dulled ears. 'Here's I've got to go and tell the doctor all about

it; there'll be no slinking of him. As for Miss Suffy, I'll never go a-near her again. You'll go right along and tell her yourself first thing in the morning.'

Having thus exhausted his vocabulary, he banged the door behind him, and went forth unwillingly to meet his master's so-dreaded wrath.

Arrived at the surgery, he made blundering confession, and stood passive while the storm broke unmercifully on his head. As much as he had given to Emma, so much and more he received unto himself, for young Gilbert Lyall had a temper, and could use his tongue to advantage on rare occasions.

When at last William was suffered to retire into the grateful silence of the night, he bore with him a bottle vaguely labelled 'The Mixture,' the which, if it did no good to Miss Sophia, was certainly calculated to do her no harm.

This was presently delivered by the hand of Lottie, and William sat stolidly by the fire till bedtime.

A night's rest and a brief supplementary search in the dim light of a foggy morning, failed to relieve the situation, and William evinced tokens of the deepest melancholy as he touched his hat and asked:

'The gig, sir, or the horse, sir?'

'The gig, for Farrel and Henderley, in twenty minutes,' returned the doctor shortly. 'I must see Miss Drew first, and explain this wretched business. Remember, sir, it's more than your place is worth to allow anything approaching this to happen again.'

'It never 'ool, sir; I'll take my oath on't,' replied William, with an upward glancing of the eyes.

A dawning sense of humour enlivened Gilbert somewhat, as he tapped at and opened the door of Miss Sophia's cottage.

She called down from the bedroom, bidding whoever was there to come up.

'I hope you are a little better this morning, Miss Drew,' he observed, with a brave attempt at cordiality.

'Better,' croaked Miss Sophia, with a most alarming hoarseness. 'Likely now, ain't it! And that,' pointing with a shaking finger to the still full bottle on the washstand, 'is no more like Squire Powley's prescription than it's like porter. You'll send back the paper directly, if you please, and I'll get old Robinson to make it up. He's done it before.'

'What is food at one time may be poison at another,' replied the doctor courteously. 'Just allow me, if you please,' and he made a gallant attempt to take her flat wrist within his practised fingers. 'I'll take your pulse and your temperature now I *am* here.'

Miss Sophia jerked the sheet over her hands. 'No, young sir,' she retorted grimly. 'The prescription 'll set me up better than temperatures.'

Dr. Lyall rubbed hard at his chin.

'I'm sorry to say the paper never reached me,' he said, with considerable trepidation. 'My man brought me only an empty envelope.'

'Do you mean to tell me that that prescription is *lost*?' gasped Miss Sophia.

'Oh, certainly not. It couldn't get lost in William's little kitchen. Let us say *mislaid*, Miss Drew. It will turn up shortly, you'll see. I'll send round a simple cooling draught, and you'll keep quite quiet in bed to-day. Light nourishing diet——'

'Your advice, young sir,' interrupted Miss Sophia, 'goes in at one ear and out at the other. I wonder at your audacity standing there and advising, after what has happened.'

'I should like to atone, as far as may be, for my man's carelessness,' said Gilbert politely, as he turned to go. 'I shall look in, probably, towards evening.'

'Does he mean to say he will come, whether I want him or not?' groaned Miss Sophia. 'I'll bar the door again him if he persists. Such impudence on him.'

III.

THE CONSTRAINT OF LOVE.

MISS SOPHIA spent the rest of the morning in solitude, but the afternoon brought Miss Wise—familiarily known in the village as Miss Tilly—the eldest daughter of the genial proprietor of the Manor Farm.

Miss Tilly was a small person to whom Nature had doled out few and scanty gifts of grace and beauty. When barely thirty she had been induced to undergo a serious operation, and Gilbert

Lyall, attending her at that time with a solicitude, fostered by long and pleasant associations, had grieved to see her hair turn rapidly from black to grey, as she groped in the thick darkness of the Valley of the Shadow.

The operation had greatly prolonged her life, but she and her father and the doctor shared between them the secret that her years were certainly numbered.

Yet week in week out she went her quiet way about the village, scattering seeds of loving-kindness from out an ever-full basket, and looking for no return in the way of harvest. Her rich and beautiful voice, the one great gift that had been bestowed on her, was ever at the service of the sick and needy; and faded eyes, strained and weary with watching for Death, often looked up into her white face as she sang, and caught the light of heaven on her brow, and beheld in her the beauty and grace and sweetness of a ministering angel.

'I have come,' she said brightly, 'to spend a long hour with you. Will you have me?'

'There's a chair,' said Miss Sophia, nodding towards the accommodation specified; and Tilly accepted even this small courtesy—coming from Miss Drew—as a token that she was welcome. It was thus that she contrived to gather so much sweetness into her shadowed life, being content to receive little if she might but give much.

Conversation, always difficult with Miss Sophia, was particularly so to-day. Tilly tried many themes, but all fell flat, and the invalid returned with dreary iteration to the lost prescription, and the audacity of the young doctor.

'I should like either to read or to sing to you,' ventured Tilly presently.

'Whichever you like,' replied Miss Sophia. 'It makes no difference.'

'Then I will sing,' said Tilly, and she started off with 'Rock of Ages,' a hymn for which she was famous in the village.

But the passionate tenderness of her song seemed to awaken no response in the heart of the hard old woman.

Not for the desire to hide in the Cleft Rock, she craved; rather, the power to stand erect before her Maker, and proclaim herself worthy by virtue of her service.

'I'd sooner have had "Thou Judge of quick and dead,"' she said, by way of comment, as Tilly ceased. 'Them soft sort of

hymns don't touch me. Some of 'em in that Sankey's fairly sickens me with their "dears" and "preciouses."

'I'm sorry you don't like "Rock of Ages,"' said Tilly, wisely avoiding a discussion of 'Sankey's.' 'It is the one hymn I would like to have sung to me when I am passing from earth.'

'There's no accounting for tastes,' observed Miss Sophia.

A quick rap at the door announced another visitor, and Miss Drew, surmising that it was the doctor, caught her breath in amaze at the 'impudence' of the man who wouldn't be dismissed.

Tilly greeted him cordially, and stole noiselessly from the bedchamber.

For nearly ten minutes the doctor and Miss Sophia waged lively warfare, and it could not be said that either got the upper hand. The doctor, however, tired first, and descended abruptly to the kitchen, where he found Tilly stirring arrowroot over the low fire.

'Who's to take that up?' he asked.

'I, of course,' returned Tilly, serenely.

'I can't imagine why you do it,' he exclaimed. 'I have warned you repeatedly about climbing such stairs as these. Why should you risk your life, Tilly, in unnecessary service? *Your* life, which is a thousand times more valuable than hers.'

'She is a good woman, according to her lights,' said Tilly.

'She has no lights,' returned the doctor hotly. 'She is wilfully and wickedly blind.'

'This,' said Tilly, referring to the arrowroot, 'is done. Will you take it up?'

'I take it up?' repeated Gilbert.

'It would save me the stairs, you know,' observed Tilly, her eyes twinkling.

'For pity's sake, then, give me the saucepan,' said the doctor. 'There's nothing like being practical.'

'You don't really mean to take it?' said Tilly, when she had poured out the arrowroot and set it neatly on a tray.

'I do, though. You sit down for a minute and then get on your things. I'll see you home round the lane. It isn't fit for you to be mooning about alone these dark evenings.'

Tilly looked up with a smile in her eyes, and her answer was writ large in the smile. Was she not a little plain-featured old maid, prematurely grey-headed, and with no compensations in the way of figure? Who would molest her?

The doctor read her answer and altered it to his liking, knowing what wealth and beauty lay hidden beneath her plain exterior, and knowing, too, in what esteem she was held in Norton Wick. Not a roistering youth in the village but would hush his ribald jest as he saw her approach in the glimmering starlight. Not a man, however uncouth and clumsy, but would step aside to give her the cleanest bit of the path.

'I found Miss Wise making arrowroot,' he explained, as he again faced his cantankerous patient, 'and I brought it up to save her the stairs.'

'Arrowroot a'most always turns sour on my stomach,' observed Miss Sophia.

'Is there anything on earth that wouldn't,' thought the doctor.

'It is the best thing possible for you,' he said aloud.

'The best thing possible for me would be that prescription you've gone and lost,' snapped Miss Sophia.

'Perhaps a kind Providence intervened to keep you from poisoning yourself with unsuitable drugs,' retorted the doctor. 'I dare say Miss Wise stirred up a prayer or two with the arrowroot, so it is bound not to disagree this time.'

'Young man,' said Miss Sophia harshly, 'are you aware that a day is coming when you'll have to give account of every idle word?'

'Bad job for some of us,' replied Gilbert wickedly. 'But—don't you read your Bible with one eye, Miss Drew, seeing you will have to give account of the use of two. That is the best advice I can give you to-day. Good evening.'

'Good-bye,' said Miss Sophia significantly. 'You needn't come again. If so be I should want to hear you making light of sacred things in my bedroom—which ain't likely—I'll send.'

'We have been going it hammer and tongs,' said the doctor to Tilly, as he drew her arm within his and shut the door. 'She has bidden me farewell for all time, and she hadn't the common courtesy to ask me to send in my bill.'

He saw her safely home, and was returning to his own domain with a good appetite for dinner, when he encountered William, who, inspired by a laudable desire to make his peace with Emma and the children, had filled his pockets with free-will offerings, and was hurrying from his duties half an hour before his appointed time.

'I want you in the surgery, William,' said the doctor,

William touched his hat and followed, though rebellion was in his heart.

Arrived in the surgery, Dr. Lyall took a sealed note from his table and handed it over coolly.

'Take this,' he said, 'to Robinson, the chemist, in Winterby. He closes at eight. If you are sharp you can catch the 6.40 train.'

'There's two miles between the station and the shop,' ventured William, rubbing hard at the calf of his right leg.

'Just so. You will have ample time to walk it; and if the small parcel which you will probably have to bring back is ready in time, you will be able to return by the 9.20. The trains are fortunately convenient, and so save you a walk of eight miles, counting both ways.'

'We druv within two miles of Winterby this morning, sir,' protested William, groaning inwardly.

'We did,' assented the doctor, 'and shall probably do the same the day after to-morrow. Your information is beside the mark.'

'And there's the post and the tallygraph,' suggested William, faintly.

'Exactly,' replied the doctor; 'but I desire this note delivered by hand before Robinson closes. If you should happen to miss the 6.40, which you will do if you linger much longer, Robinson's private house is two doors from the Grammar School, and you must leave the note there.'

William retired crestfallen, but wholly alive to the fact that it was advisable to catch the 6.40.

'After all,' thought Gilbert, as he sat down to a comfortable dinner, 'there's considerable satisfaction in paying out a man for his rank carelessness. If only old Robinson has kept a copy of that prescription, I shall be able to call quits to Miss Sophia, especially if the mixture half kills her, as is not unlikely.'

IV.

PEACE WITH HONOUR.

It was well on for ten when William handed in a small parcel to the doctor's housemaid, and slouched off, weary at heart, and too dispirited to care much about the propitiation of his family. He

had been caught in a heavy shower, and the confectionery in his side pockets had been reduced to a couple of large lumpy masses, which reminded him at every step of their sunken estate.

He took a fancy, upon reaching home, to look through the kitchen window. The small room was bright and cosy with fire-light, and was in perfect order, except for one corner, where the framework of the bureau stood out a foot from its accustomed place, flanked by its dislodged drawers. A certain slip of faded paper was spread out conspicuously on the scarlet table cover, and before it sat Emma, laughing and hugging the youngest child.

William opened the door, and, entering, stood stolidly with his back against it.

His appearance was the signal for a general chorus of, 'Oh, our daddie, it's found!' and presently, regaining the use of his limbs, he stalked forward, set down the sticky masses aforesaid, possessed himself of the prescription, and turning his back resolutely on the joys of home, made straight for the doctor's house, and forced a way to the dining-room.

'It's found, sir!' he cried; 'and I be as glad as if I'd had five pound gi'en me, that I be. Eh, but I'd ha' gone to Winterby for that on my hands and knees, I 'ood, and never grumbled.'

'That, or, more correctly speaking, a copy of that, is exactly what you did go for,' said the doctor, coolly.

'This beats all, this does,' observed William, as he sat down uninvited, and wiped his brow.

'It is quite satisfactory,' said the doctor. 'Go home, William, and take warning.'

'Warning?' repeated William, whose slow wits were dazed. 'You surely ain't giving of me warning, sir, now it's all come right?'

'Not that kind of warning, you queer fellow,' laughed the doctor. 'Take warning, you know—that is, take—take heed, that such a thing doesn't happen again.'

'If that's all,' said William, 'I 'ool take it, sure enough, and thank 'ee, sir.'

Returning to his own home, he once more propped his weary frame against that of the bureau, and addressed his wife.

'You're a 'ooman, Emma,' he said, 'as has made me most partikler happy, and kep' my house in a way as does you credit. I 'oodn't have you dwell upon what I said last night, not for a fortune.'

'Oh, father, it was in the hollow place under the bureau,' faltered Emma. 'I thought of it all of a sudden, and I said to Lottie, "We'll have it out," and we did, though oak's terrible heavy.'

'You're a 'ooman, Emma, as has got sense in your head,' said William, with flattering unction. 'But the doctor, he beats both you and me, for he's been and sent to Winterby and got that prescription. I went and fetched it all the way without knowing, and there he sets a-laughing now, wi' two o' them three-guinea prescriptions in his hand, and one worth as much as t'other.'

'Oh, our William! You haven't never been all the way to Winterby?' said Emma. 'You'll be starved to death.'

'I be a'most,' said William submissively; 'but I've brought some sassengers,' and he produced these delicacies from his tail pocket, where they had lain in comparative security. 'The sooner you cooks 'em the better, and we'll have a comfortable bit o' supper together, children and all.'

'Here's a father you've got,' said Emma, determined on a perfect restoration of the family peace. 'Bulls' eyes and sugar sticks isn't enough, but he must bring home sausages for us all. Give 'im a kiss apiece for 'em, now do.'

.....

Nine o'clock had scarcely rung, when Dr. Lyall tapped at Miss Drew's door with his usual decision, and let himself in.

'Who's there?' called out the invalid, in a particularly hostile voice. 'If it's the doctor, you've no need to come up. I'm better this morning, I thank you.'

'Quite so,' said Gilbert; and remained leaning on the handrail.

'Are you gone?' called Miss Sophia, hearing no further demonstration.

'Not exactly. Fact is I've got that prescription of yours. Shall I lay it on the stairs?'

'You don't mean it, young sir,' cried Miss Sophia. 'Why, I wouldn't have that prescription laid on the stairs like a bit of waste paper, not by any doctor in the land. Bring it up here, do.'

'With pleasure,' said Gilbert, and ascended forthwith.

'You said it was *lost*,' exclaimed Miss Drew reproachfully, as she stretched out a lean hand for her treasure.

'Not I,' returned Gilbert. 'You said it was lost, and I said it was mislaid.'

'Which is all the same,' replied Miss Sophia, illogically.

'I have in my possession a bottle of that mixture, made up by Robinson,' said the doctor amiably. 'If you care to accept it, to be going on with, I shall be happy to leave it,' and he drew the bottle from his pocket. 'You can see for yourself that it has Robinson's writing on his label.'

Miss Sophia took it, sampled it solemnly, and looked up at the doctor with grim determination.

'Young sir,' she said, 'if I've in any wise been unpolite, I beg your pardon. This is the genewin article.'

'You must take it at your own risk,' said the doctor good-naturedly. 'It is my duty to tell you that I consider it wholly unsuitable for you, in your present state.'

'I'm uncommonly glad and willing to risk it, sir,' said Miss Sophia, and applied herself at once to the taking of it.

She followed it up with praiseworthy endurance all that day, and the next; but only a stubborn and rebellious spirit prevented her from owning that the more she took the worse she grew.

V.

RAIN ON THE MOWN GRASS.

MISS SOPHIA was not fit to be left alone, and Tilly had come to sit up with her.

Simple fever had run on to delirium, and she talked incessantly, firing off a continuous battery of threats of judgment to come, and addressing each separate shot to Tilly, as though her small person were a compact representative of the sinners of Norton Wick.

But towards morning she grew suddenly quiet and began to pick nervously at the opening of her bed-gown.

Tilly presently observed a slender cord entangled about her fingers, and a something round and bright, which had been dragged from its concealment, lying glittering against the white folds of her nightdress. She bent down to see what it might be, and beheld *a wedding ring*.

Their eyes met.

'What's the time?' asked Miss Sophia, fiercely.

'One o'clock,' said Tilly.

'That's a lie! Did I ever let twelve to one go past without knowing it? For ten, twenty, thirty years, I've risen in my bed and prayed for *him*, that the Almighty would temper His judgment with mercy. You go away now; what call have you got to be spying on me?'

Tilly would gladly have obeyed, but her limbs refused to carry her. Miss Sophia, again oblivious of her presence, slipped the ring upon the wedding finger and knelt upon the bed.

Tilly sank trembling upon her knees, and covered her ears. But now and then strange muffled sounds, like the inarticulate wailing of a hurt child, penetrated the silence with which she had wrapped herself about. Then all was still and she heard her own heart's beating. When at last she mustered courage to look up, Miss Sophia was sleeping soundly with the bedclothes drawn orderly about her shoulders.

It was seven before she awaked.

'You have had a beautiful sleep,' said Tilly; 'try now and take a little tea, will you, dear?'

Miss Sophia started, and a fierce light blazed suddenly in her eyes. The teacup rattled helplessly against the saucer.

'The fever has left you weak,' said Tilly with infinite compassion. 'Lie back—so—and let me hold the cup.'

Miss Sophia pouted up her lips, and sipped and drank. But presently she spoke out harshly as ever.

'I s'pose I've been light headed and let out all my secrets, and you're just a-dying to know the ins and outs of everything.'

'Indeed,' said Tilly, 'I am not. I wish for nothing, Miss Drew, but that you would let me help you, and love you, just a little—for Christ's sake.'

Miss Sophia jerked the bed-clothes suddenly over her face. Not even Tilly's pitying eyes might see the gentle havoc she had wrought. But once, from under the coverlet, there came the sound of a long, shuddering sob, and the brass knobs of the bedstead jingled with the shock.

Tilly turned resolutely away, and began to set the tiny room in order.

'I think I'll go now,' she said presently, when she was quite sure that Miss Sophia had emerged from her concealment.

'Oh, I can't a-bear it,' cried the old woman, 'not just yet.'

Sit down and sing to me, just for five minutes. That "Rock of Ages" ain't so bad. Sing that one verse that starts with "Nothing in my hand." It's been in all my dreams.'

Tilly obeyed.

Miss Sophia stretched out a shrivelled hand and laid it on the edge of Tilly's gown.

'Again,' she said; 'that one verse.'

Tilly caught up the hand and held it softly, and repeated the song.

'I'm most uncommon obliged to you,' said Miss Sophia, with a pitiful quivering of her under lip. 'You've showed more feeling than I've had showed for five-and-thirty years. The Lord reward it unto you. You'd better be going home now.'

'What about the medicine?' said Tilly.

Miss Sophia nerved herself for a terrible task.

'That prescription,' she said, 'ain't curing me. If you'll tell my symptoms to your doctor, and ask him to mix me something—careful—I'll give it a chance. But I don't want no visiting. Not for any feeling I've got again him now—as a doctor; but his face reminds me of—another, as I'd better have seen buried five-and-thirty years ago.'

Tilly stood for a few moments looking down upon her with sweet seriousness, then bent gravely and kissed her.

Miss Sophia's face was wrung with a sudden convulsion. 'Oh, go away!' she cried, 'I can't a-bear you here another minute, and your mother, she'll be looking out for you.'

When the sound of the outer door closing behind Tilly told her that she was alone, she threw aside all restraint, and rocked and swayed herself to and fro in an utter abandonment of emotion. 'Oh, Lord, Lord, Lord!' she cried, 'if I'd had a girl like that to be looking out for, I'd never have been a hard old woman with a heart like crab-apples, for I wasn't made that way at first—I wasn't.'

The fit of passion had its way, and at length subsided. Miss Sophia lay back on the pillow and wiped the cold sweat from her brow. She had shed no tear.

But presently she drew out from beneath the bolster a quite clean handkerchief, a dainty enough morsel of cambric scented with home-grown lavender, for Miss Sophia had her prim little ways.

She raised it reverently, and drew it many times athwart her lips, then proceeded to fold it with great ceremony.

'That kiss,' she said, 'is folded up in this handkercher. I couldn't a-bear to wash it away in soapy water, or to swish it up in physic; but I can lay it away in fair white linen, ready for my burying. It's the first kiss I've had for five-and-thirty year, and most likely 'twill be the last; but I'll always feel that a angel give it me; and I'll have this handkercher spread over my face when I'm laid out for burying; I will—I will!'

And a quick rain of tears sprinkled the kerchief as she folded it, and wakened the perfume of the lavender.

ELIZABETH STUART-LANGFORD.

THE SYCOPHANT OF THE LAST CENTURY.

' Ah, George Bubb Dodington, Lord Melcombe—no,
Your's was the wrong way!—always understand,
Supposing that permissibly you planned
How statesmanship—your trade—in outward show
Might figure as inspired by simple zeal
For serving country, king, and commonweal
(Though service tire to death the body, tease
The soul from out an o'ertasked patriot drudge),
And yet should prove zeal's outward show agrees
In all respects—right reason being judge—
With inward care that while the statesman spends
Body and soul thus freely for the sake
Of public good, his private welfare take
No harm by such devotedness.'

ROBERT BROWNING, *Parleyings with certain People.*

DESTINY may decide our lots in life, but character will come to the front and nature assert itself. George Bubb Dodington died a peer and lived in luxury. He had literary gifts of no mean order. It was his hap to flourish in the iron age, so graphically described by Macaulay, when eminent men of letters had ceased to be made secretaries of State, or sent abroad on delicate and lucrative missions, and before they might be emancipated and enriched by the patronage of a book-reading public. Had the clever Dorsetshire youth come penniless to the town, he would have taken a conspicuous place among the hacks of Grub Street. Absolutely devoid of principle or scruples like the rest of the class, he had the tact in which most of them were lacking, and would have been capable of turning his hand to anything. He would have patiently danced attendance in the ante-rooms of the great, and would metaphorically have grovelled on his face when invited to the bedchamber levée. A hint would have sufficed to give him the line for a dedication, and he would have revelled in the flattery which was rewarded by guineas, as it was more or less ingeniously fulsome. With his subtle *flair* he would seldom have blundered. And he would have turned involuntary confidences to excellent account, when he had a retainer from some hostile quarter to jump upon a fallen patron. His chief difficulty—and it would have been one he was well qualified to surmount—would have been to steer clear of such flagrant inconsistencies as might have

affected the prostitution of his talents and lessened the sale of his works.

But as destiny would have it, Dodington was born to perhaps the most enviable of positions. He was a gentleman of good descent and ample means. Succeeding very soon to the landed estates of an uncle, he was wealthy beyond reasonable wishes. Never a niggard when it was a question of ostentation or self-indulgence, he could afford to lavish 140,000*l.* in rebuilding his ancestral mansion. The new Eastbury was one of the noblest edifices of Vanbrugh; the ceilings of the suite of reception rooms, like the hall of Greenwich Hospital, were painted by Sir James Thornhill. Eastbury, by the way, became one of the seats of Mr. Farquharson, the famous old hunting squire of Dorset, and 'the Druid' has described the funereal festivities when the second pack of his favourite hounds was brought to the hammer there. Though the elder Bubb, who married the Dodington heiress, is said variously to have been either an Irish adventurer or an English apothecary—very possibly he was both—the son was bred in such an aristocratic atmosphere as young Coningsby at Eton. He lived in the intimacy of the highest society; he had the *entrée* of the two rival courts; he was hand-in-glove with cabinet ministers and political wire-pullers, as with the roving and dissipated men of fashion. He took his place at once in Parliament as a matter of course, and although no great orator, when only in his twenty-fifth year his talents had been recognised. It could have been no Ministerial job that sent him to Portugal when important commercial arrangements were being discussed to replace the able Methuen, and there he remained for two years doing excellent work. Nor did he merely show the qualities of a shrewd diplomatist and sound financier. He had something more than mere literary facility. His pamphlets were more telling than his speeches, and he might have taken respectable honours as a poet, had he been stimulated by penury or literary ambition. More than once he was invited to write prologues to plays, which it was hoped might take the town by storm. There his character as a man of fashion and a notable Macænas might have recommended him, for in place of being a hack himself he kept many hacks in his pay. He was never more pleased or more liberal than when being surfeited with sugar-plums. But his talents received more gratifying tribute from men above all suspicion of flattery. He was praised by the poets of the 'Night Thoughts'

and 'The Seasons.' Fielding dedicated to him a disquisition on 'True Greatness.' The great novelist might have been suspected of bitter satire, but at that time he had given up his profitable playwriting; he was in close relations with Dodington's parasite Ralph, and fighting hard for a precarious livelihood. Yet about the same time Bentley addressed him in an epistle, and Lord Littleton in an eclogue.

In truth it would seem that the fairies had lavished their gifts on his cradle, when some neglected sister turned the blessings into a curse, which damns him to infamy. She gave the man of so many fair prospects the instinct—the very genius—of servility. That is the keynote which makes his career a memorable example and a warning. He never knew how *se faire valoir* or learned to wait upon the future with the dignity of calm assurance. For we have said nothing of his most certain guarantees for independence in those days of intrigue and corruption. He commanded half a dozen seats in rotten boroughs, and had much to say besides in the elections for Bridgewater, for which he chose to be returned. The puzzle is that so able a man should have made so grave a blunder. Had he held back and been plausibly honest and consistent the rivals for high office must have come to him, and with his talents and connections he might have made his own terms. But he was always effusively and aggressively obtrusive. As Lord Steyne remarked of old Sir Pitt Crawley, he was for ever ratting, but ratting at the wrong time. In a singularly unscrupulous age, his alliance inferred contamination, and even when treachery was expected and condoned, no Minister dared trust him.

Consequently his life was a long succession of mortifications and disappointments; and the childless sycophant was tantalised by the coveted peerage being bestowed only in the year before his death. Had he judged himself as shrewdly as he judged other people, his wisdom would have been to let himself be forgotten. We are reminded of the comments of Burke and Wilkes on Thurlow's dramatic apostrophe: 'When I forget my king, may my God forget me.' But Dodington had loved to live in the glare of publicity, and in an evil hour for his fame, he determined to write his memoirs.

It may be presumed that he made the best possible case for himself, but his bitterest enemy could have desired no more deadly revenge than the publication of these astonishing self-revelations. Seldom has a witness under cross-examination turned

himself more thoroughly inside out. We have little doubt they gave Thackeray the hint for the inimitable confessions of Mr. Barry Lyndon. Like the blustering Irishman, there is a moral obliquity in Dodington, which makes him most delightfully candid when his conduct is most open to censure. Frank as he is, it cannot be said that he was no hypocrite, for he seems to have no conception that there was anything to conceal. Yet after all he only carried to a perverse excess the vices and meannesses of the men of his time. When Johnson said that patriotism was the last refuge of a scoundrel, it was no paradox; he only gave expression to a platitude. The patriot was the politician out of place, who made the reform of abuses his stalking horse to regain it, and who thundered against the treasons of Ministers till he could step into their shoes. It is surprising that Macaulay did not make Dodington, like Barère, the subject of one of his scathing bursts of invective, though the casual allusion to him in the essay on the Earl of Chatham is stinging enough: 'In the age of low and dirty prostitution, in the age of Dodington and Sandys,' &c. On the one, as on the other, he might have emptied the vials of his vitriol with less fear than usual of being taxed with exaggeration. The one was the English counterpart of the other, making allowance for circumstances and surroundings. Neither was essentially ill-natured or bloodthirsty, though the Frenchman consented to make himself the mouthpiece of the most atrocious measures promulgated by the terrorising *régime*. But one and the other would do anything for the sweets of office; and in Barère's place we can easily conceive that Dodington, with some searchings of heart, could have been induced to purvey victims for the guillotine.

Another similarity is to be noted in the memoirs of the two men. As a rule, in reading biographies we guard against the *lues Boswelliana*. But the recent English translation of Carnot's book, and those memoirs of Lord Melcombe, which have been neglected or forgotten, were presented by the editors with profuse apologies. They anticipate the very worst that the most rancorous critic can say of their subjects. In fact, though we may be grateful to Mr. Thomas Penruddocke Wyndham for publishing the Dodington diaries, we suspect that he was about as disinterested and unselfish as their author. He tells us how they came into his possession. Lord Melcombe left everything to his cousin Mr. Thomas Wyndham. That gentleman

bequeathed his books and the Melcombe manuscripts to Henry Penruddocke Wyndham, 'requesting of him not to print or publish any of them, but those that we propose to be made publick and such only as may in some degree do honour to Lord Melcombe's memory.' As with scarcely an exception they do his memory infinite discredit, we cannot say much for the legatee's discretion. He admits himself that Dodington's conduct 'was wholly directed by the base motives of avarice, vanity, and selfishness.' His apology is that as the diaries were fairly copied out, the presumption was that they were intended for publication. We assume that the booksellers paid money down, and, as Johnson said, 'there is an end of it.' In any case they are a valuable contribution to materials for contemporary history. Dodington has painted himself as Boswell painted the great lexicographer, and as the Lord Protector desired to be painted, with the warts, the wrinkles, and the blemishes. He throws vivid side-lights on the men and manners of the time, and his unblushing self-assurance is their best extenuation. He was emphatically the man of his age, though one of the meanest and with the least excuse. From Prince Frederic and the Pelhams and the Bedfords downwards, all—to use the vulgarism which is most expressive—were tarred with the same brush. All were looking after themselves, and no man gave anything for nothing. Each piece of patronage in Church or State went by favour; the nation was saddled with pensioners, bastard kinsmen, and parasites; public spirit seemed wellnigh extinct, and national interests were sacrificed to private gain. The future Lord Chatham was the one illustrious exception. When he accepted the lucrative office of Paymaster of the Forces, he declined to draw interest on the financial reserves, and refused the customary commissions on foreign subsidies. So he won the hold on the hearts of the middle classes which maintained him in power against the jealousies of an aristocratic oligarchy. Yet even Pitt, with his profound contempt for the time-servers, condescended to make cordial advances to Dodington, when the support of the borough-monger was important, in prospect of an impending dissolution.

Dodington began to keep the diaries in the spring of 1749. At that time he was already in his fifty-seventh year, a veteran politician and intriguer; like his contemporaries he had lived fast and freely, and was a victim to gout and other maladies. As we have seen, he had made a fair and early start, but the

slippery politician was climbing a slippery pole, and with all his efforts he had never got beyond a certain point. In 1715 family influence returned him for Winchelsey. When he came back from the Portuguese mission and succeeded to his uncle, he controlled Winchelsey and Weymouth with Melcombe Regis, which was then exceptionally well represented, for it sent four representatives to Parliament. He elected to sit himself for Bridgewater, where his battles with the Egmont interest for the second seat led to some of his most suggestive negotiations with Ministers and the monarch. He won the favour of Walpole and owed him a heavy debt of gratitude, though no doubt his borough influence had its weight. In 1724 he replaced Henry Pelham as a Lord of the Treasury; rich as he was, he received the sinecure tenable for life of Irish Clerk of the Rolls; and in 1731 the member for Bridgewater—he sat for that borough for thirty years—was made Lord-Lieutenant of the county. Among all the members whom Walpole retained in his pay, it might have been supposed that Dodington was one of the most closely bound to him. But while still voting obsequiously with the Minister, he eagerly welcomed some advances from the Heir Apparent. He assiduously attended the levées and receptions at Leicester House, and talebearers brought reports to his chief that Dodington was in the habit of abusing him to the Heir Apparent. As he had a pretty turn for ridicule, and delighted in using it maliciously, the thing is possible enough. The Prince was not the man to keep a confidence, and there were listeners in plenty with sharpened ears, ready to do an ill turn to every intruder. For it was the characteristic of all ministries and combinations in those days, and notably of the hungrily expectant Leicester House clique, that far from welcoming any effective ally, they cold-shouldered the rival candidate for favours. Undoubtedly the pliant and subtle Dodington was dangerous. He united political influence to the baseness of the born parasite, and might do exceptional mischief to his friends, if he were tempted to turn Judas. So Littleton and Chesterfield, who had the ear of the Prince, conspired to get rid of him, and succeeded. Dodington consulted his immediate interests, and indulged his resentment by becoming more humbly subservient to the Minister than before. Walpole, with his contempt for political humanity, smiled and seemed to overlook the offence, though his son Horace never forgave it. With his cynical humour Horace places Dodington in a

ludicrously unenviable light when relating the rude practical jokes with which his feather-headed Royal Highness had victimised him. They remind us of poor Boswell's trials under the roof of his patron Lord Lonsdale. But Dodington had had a scare and a lesson, and for six years he stuck staunchly to the Walpole colours. He had even the satisfaction of rejecting overtures from the princely opposition, when the Prince was intriguing for an increase of his income, as they were accompanied by no adequate offers. But soon afterwards he began to be troubled in spirit, for he saw that Walpole's ascendancy was shaken. The jealousy that would brook no opposition in the Cabinet, had forced his ablest supporters into violent opposition. It was high time for the rats to look to their safety, and when Argyle seceded in 1740, Dodington seized the opportunity and followed him. He was satirised as a renegade by the Ministerial pamphleteers and caricaturists, and the most scathing of the fancies which commemorate that desertion represents him as a spaniel between the legs of Argyle. The caricature caught on; it was displayed in the windows of all the print-shops, and the wound to his sensitive vanity must have been terrible.

He had sacrificed a Lordship of the Treasury on a calculation of the chances: in the meantime there was nothing for it but to wait, and to do his utmost to precipitate his benefactor's fall. He threw himself into opposition with exceptional virulence. He was no great orator, but assuredly he never spoke with more effect than when smarting under the Minister's contemptuous sneers at those self-mortifying gentlemen who had serenely shared his infamy. Perhaps he was never more or less of a man than when, casting all considerations of gratitude and old friendships to the winds, he venomously assailed his former colleagues, with the knowledge he had acquired in unguarded intercourse. The renegade had his reward when restored to office as Treasurer of the Navy under the stop-gap Wilmington Ministry. Pelham succeeded Wilmington. In Pelham, with the immense Newcastle interest at his back, Dodington had desecrated the coming man. To Pelham, with frank effusiveness, he had been paying assiduous court, and there was something approximating to friendship between them. Pelham's political standard was scarcely higher than Walpole's, and he was content to take men as he found them. Unlike Walpole, he had no touch of autocratic egotism; on the contrary, his principle was catholic comprehension, and his minis-

tries were so many happy families, whose claws were pared and antipathies conciliated. The place-hunter was again in a lucrative berth, and had no longer to come to the call of an imperious master. He might freely air his views and even look for promotion. But in his excessive care of himself he was always guarding against eventualities. As the years went by he began to reflect that the King was old and his strength was failing. What would become of the member for Bridgewater in case of a demise of the Crown? It was a ticklish situation, and he would have liked to sit respectably on the fence, but it was no time for trimming. He takes up the frank tale of what occurred in the first paragraphs of the Diary. In the beginning of 1749 he was laid up with gout. He had heard with pleasure that the Prince had spoken kindly of him, and one day he was cheered by a message from his Royal Highness, offering him full return of his favour, with the principal direction of his affairs. The Prince said afterwards that Dodington had forced himself on him, and though neither of the parties are to be trusted, that is the more credible version. The Prince had already made unofficial overtures, when applying to Parliament for an increase to his income, and these had been rejected by the offended courtier, for Walpole was still strong and the King was in fair health. Even Prince Frederic would scarcely have stooped to increase his offer, when he had nothing especial to gain. That he looked on Dodington as a possible Richelieu or Alberoni is beyond all belief. The probability is that Dodington used Ralph, who was always in his pay and who came as the Prince's messenger, as an intermediary to intimate that he was open to reasonable proposals. Ralph was an adventurer of talent, a clever pen of all work, who put himself up to auction, and after making a bargain, was always ready to be bought off for a consideration. He had no small share of Dodington's confidence. The Prince was lavish of promises he probably never intended to keep, and Dodington's overweening vanity led him to be befooled. After taking two days for consideration, he wrote the Minister, humbly begging permission to resign. Pelham was surprised and alarmed. The defection of a Dodington was an ominous sign; and he called to remonstrate. He found Dodington draped in the patriot's dignity. 'I told him that I saw the country in so dangerous a condition and found myself so incapable to contribute to its relief, that I thought it misbecoming me any longer to receive emoluments,' &c. No wonder the Minister was staggered at his friend's parade of disinterested

patriotism. However, he reluctantly consented to carry a message to the King, and reported that the resignation had been received very graciously. Dodington was infinitely relieved, but he ought to have known his Majesty better. Amiable falsehood was eminently characteristic of the Minister who never made an enemy if he could help it, but we can imagine the guttural German oaths of the irritated monarch. George was a good hater, and, as Dodington learned to his cost, he never forgot or forgave the scandalous desertion. It was a standing draft on the courtiers' reserves of obsequious humility which even his resources were unable to meet.

There was the less excuse for his folly, that his reception on his return to Kew showed that he was worth bidding for. The Prince was all civility. 'He desired me to come into his service upon any terms and by any title I pleased: that what he could not do for me in his present situation must be made up in futurity. All this in a manner so noble and frank, and with expressions so full of affection and regard,' &c. That is the writing of the fawning courtier, fresh from the flattering interview. We can scarcely associate nobility and candour with poor Frederic; yet Dodington, when his interests were involved, was a keen reader of character. He takes an early opportunity of 'begging the Prince's protection,' and his friendship was frankly extended to him, till he callously threw him over. Established as a member of the household, he immediately begins, like his master, with promises of patronage. The parasites had their parasites, but all preying on their common country, and eager to give that they might get. He offers a Mr. Bance, who was his humble petitioner, the choice of two things, or rather of his interest in obtaining them. On the whole, Mr. Bance prefers a place which would give him the secret government of the Bank, as thereby he would be most useful to his friends. 'I agreed,' says the eighteenth century Pepys, 'and promised to undertake the affair with the Prince.'

Whether the princely promises are to be taken literally or no, we can understand the disturbance in the mistrustful household with the assumptions of the new pretender to the premiership. Jealousies were at least as active as when Littleton and Chesterfield had ousted him before. In six months he is suspicious of a general conspiracy against him, and the suspicions were only too well founded. Thenceforth there is the same monotonous tale of malice and backbiting, of plot and counter-plot. Anonymous

pamphleteering was the ordinary method of attack, and the diatribes of Junius had been anticipated by scribes who had his brutality and scurrility of invective without the wit or the polish. The 'frank and noble' Prince set the example, inspiring seditious libels and afterwards sneaking out of responsibility. The printer of the inspired and subsidised 'Remembrancer' is arrested, and the Prince is in mortal terror. 'What was to be done? And then he ran out into reasons why no one that belonged to him must appear.' Ralph, the writer of the libel, must be kept out of the way at any price. Dodington, on the contrary, personally apprehensive of consequences, turns Achitophel to give counsels that must compromise his master. Immediately afterwards he is himself the subject of 'the vilest and most rancorous pamphlet.' From internal evidence there was no doubt that it was written by a member of the household. Who? was the only question. A pleasant question to raise with the people with whom he was in professedly cordial intercourse. Of course, he carried his complaints to the Prince, taxing one after another on bare suspicion. Of course one and all denied all knowledge, and he was inclined to attribute the authorship to the friend who was most sympathetic. The Prince took the matter lightly, said that everybody was infamously abused, that he and his father were no exceptions. Deeply wounded as he was, Dodington is never more dignified. He declared that he only felt the attack in so far as it was prejudicial to the Prince's service, and he has that court temper of his so admirably under control as to pay a fulsome compliment when consumed by resentment. 'I had embraced with the utmost pleasure the opportunity of belonging as a servant to a Prince, whom of all mankind I should have wished to pass my life with, if his misfortune and the misfortune of the public had placed him in a private station.'

The public were ungratefully insensible to the blessing Providence had bestowed. When Prince Frederic died in March 1753, there was scarcely a sign of national sorrow. The general sentiment was one of indifference, though not a few of the more patriotic congratulated themselves on a happy riddance. But there was mourning in Leicester House, and the bereavement fell heavily on Dodington. He was in a sad quandary. He had sold himself for nought, and must set about his redemption. Naturally he lost no time. He had his half-dozen of borough seats, and he knew that the borough buyers were placable. The wrath of the King

was the graver consideration. The corpse of his patron was hardly cold before he was discussing combinations with possible confederates. The immediate results were discouraging, and he records the pious ejaculation, 'Henceforth I shall live for myself the years which God in His mercy may grant me.' It would have been well for him had he kept to the resolution, but he was not the man to turn penitent and *faire son salut* in retreat. Next morning he wakens up, brisk and busy as ever. After parenthetically fussing over precedence at the Prince's funeral, he shakes the dust of the vault off his feet and makes advances to Murray, the Solicitor-General. Murray, whose defects were timidity and complaisance, was the most agreeable intermediary to whom he could have applied. He always said more than he meant, and he assured Dodington that the Pelhams had no indisposition towards him. If there were any hitch it would come from the King, but even that, with dexterous management, would be soon got over. He undertook to bring the matter to a proper issue, and sent his suitor away well-satisfied. 'He behaved nobly and like a friend: the event is with God.' Murray paves the way, and in a week Dodington ventures to suggest an interview with Pelham, having previously 'let it be known through another friend that he was eager to enlist *under proper conditions*.' These words he underlines. Pelham would have been willing to pay a fair price, but Murray is forced to admit that the King is obdurate. Six weeks of anxious suspense had gone by before he met the Minister by appointment. Nothing could be more abject than his penitence, or more unbounded than his proffers of service. 'I desired to live with him and his as their attached friend and servant.' 'If he gave me a musket and ordered me to a post, I should certainly fire.' It must have been something of a cold *douche* when the Minister reported his Majesty's most gracious expressions. 'Here is Dodington: you made me give him the other day a great employment; he has thrown it at your head and gone over to my son. . . . I see him here sometimes, what does he come for?' It was a question that answered itself. Disappointed, but in no way disheartened, Dodington charged Pelham with a second message. 'I humbly begged pardon, which was all in my power to do, except to show his Majesty by my future services that I deserved it.' The Minister dismissed him, saying he would do his best, and would write—an answer almost as discouraging to the anxious petitioner as the absolute and definite 'No.'

It is always well to have various irons in the fire. He had ratted and resigned because the King was old; any day he might follow poor Frederic. And as Dodington was still *au mieux* at Leicester House, he bethought himself of condoling with the widowed mother of the Heir Apparent. The Princess really seems to have liked him, and she was touched by his sympathy. She encouraged him to talk as the friend of the family, interested in the education of the heir and her other children. Inevitably they passed on to the discussion of politics. The Princess confided her hopes and fears; Dodington gave the best and most disinterested advice, saying nothing of the self-seeking of his own intrigues. He presumed to ask of the young Prince's affection towards his father's memory: he hinted that he ought to have friends about him who would teach him never to forget. In other words he made a tentative bid for a charge in the heir's education. He was ready to break with the Pelhams, to play the rôle of a Bute. 'I humbly begged that she would cultivate and improve the personal influence which her many virtues gave her over the Prince; that I was sure that from the settled opinion of her prudence with all mankind, all the disinterested and sensible among us hoped for a happy settlement of the new reign.' It is like Major Bagstock begging Mr. Dombey to take care of little Paul; and like Mr. Dombey the Princess 'expressed herself civilly,' but confined herself to polite generalities. However, from that day forth, the place-hunter was equally assiduous in his attentions in both quarters.

Though he was more supple and shameless than most, as we said there were men of all ranks to keep him in countenance. Though the sun refused to shine, of course he went to court on the birthday. There he had a conversation with Lord Hillsborough, who was in a charmingly frank humour. The talk is eminently illustrative of the statecraft of the time. 'He said that the Pitts could not be quiet, but had been dabbling with the Prince, and that their plans were prevented by the Prince's death, as Mr. Pelham knew; therefore they must be disagreeable to each other, and could have no hopes of rising by him. That Mr. Fox had something very frank about him, and that he (Lord Hillsborough) resolved to push for his turn—not by opposition, for he had a family and could not afford to part with his emoluments; but if accidents should happen, he pretended to succeed—that indeed Mr. Pelham's life was as good as his, and he would not oppose him; but that he should endeavour to be next.' His Lordship added

that 'it was prodigious how many friends he had made,' and beginning with the Duke of Cumberland he named them. So that when professing devotion to the men in power, he was assiduously undermining the Pelham interest. That conversation turned Dodington's thoughts to Fox, for Hillsborough hinted that Fox was worth courting. 'I said I liked Fox very well, but it was possible he might not much like me.' Which was not only possible but probable, considering Fox's admiration for Walpole, and the way in which Dodington had acted. So he hastened to offer an explanation of his reason for ratting, which he understood that Hillsborough would communicate to Fox.

A year elapsed, during which he sought to win the Princess's ear by listening to her complaints of the Bishop of Norwich, her children's tutor, and of Earl Harcourt, a trusted member of her household, who carried tales to the King. He laments that she is not of more masculine stuff; otherwise she might have headed a third faction in opposition to those of the Pelhams and the Duke of Cumberland. So suspending these futile efforts, he renews his court to the Minister. Nearly on the anniversary of the Prince's death, he dines with him. It is the old story of the obduracy of the King—of his prejudices, as Pelham mildly puts it. Dodington grovels more abjectly than ever. 'It was never in my intention to offend his Majesty, it was sufficient that he was displeased for me to think myself to blame; and that to induce him to forgive me, I humbly offered him my services and all my interest in the House and out of it, for the rest of my life. I added that I thought this submission and the offer of five members should be sufficient to wipe away impressions, even if I were a declared Jacobite.' Crediting his guest with something of spirit, Pelham said that even if that submission did not conciliate his Majesty, Dodington might turn rusty. So it had been in the case of Pitt. 'I answered no, not in the least; that all I wished was for the King to make me over to him, to let him dispose of me as he thought fit. . . . If I was a new man, I should, in paying my court, expect that sort of civil return which was my due; but after such unworthy prejudices, and so void of all foundation, taken against me, I should never desire any intercourse with his Majesty more than a distant but profound respect on my side.' Was there ever such a delightful *non sequitur*? Was there ever such a surfeit of humble pie?

Meantime he had other anxieties. There was a contested

election coming off at Bridgewater, where interests were divided. Dodington said he was safe in his own seat, but the Pelhams expected him to control the other. He is eloquent in his virtuous indignation at 'a set of low, worthless fellows' who have prevailed on Lord Egmont to make a nomination that they may be able to sell their vote. The place-hunter has no sympathy for the abject wretches who scramble for guineas instead of office. 'The immediate expense will be great,' and he foresees cost and trouble in the future. However, he makes the best of a provoking business. He sees his Grace of Newcastle, magnifies his own sacrifices and devotion, and abuses Egmont to his heart's content. Meaner men might take money from the Minister: 'I would pay and not bring him a bill.' However, with all his scorn of corruption, he recommended two parsons who had influence over their flocks. The Duke was very willing to bribe without expenditure, and promised they should have the first livings vacant in those parts. The pair parted on pleasant terms. Dodington, ignoring his humble messages to his Majesty, declared that he 'had no design of being in favour with the King or even well with him; all I desired was that he and his brother might be able to say that the King left me to them—that was my price.'

It was well he had made personal approaches to Newcastle. In three months Mr. Pelham was dead, and on the very day of the demise all factions were in active agitation. Newcastle was busy as any of them: he forgot his grief in the paramount duty of self-defence, and Dodington was in a fever of anxiety. Within a fortnight he had a long conversation with his Grace, in which he made the most of all that had passed in confidence with Pelham, apparently attributing to him pledges he had never given, and repeating any number of flattering compliments. He might have spared his breath, for his boroughs were his best recommendation; however, he impressed upon the Duke that he had no thought of personal advantage: 'I was afraid he would have enough of that from others.' After the invariable assurance that, however they might use him, henceforth he was wholly at the service of the monarch and the Minister, the Duke was so moved by his noble bearing that he clasped him in his arms and kissed him twice, 'with the strongest assurances of affection.' Moreover, glancing at a sheet of paper displayed on the table, he read his name at the head of a list, as doubtless the Duke intended.

No wonder that three months afterwards the place-hunter lost temper when his affair had made no progress. For once he plucked up spirit, and spoke his mind to the Duke. His business must be brought to a conclusion, one way or another, and if he were to be doomed to eternal proscription, he threatened revolt. In one breath he said that as an old man with one foot in the grave, he was personally indifferent as to the result—what he cared for was the honour of the Duke, who had deluded him with fallacious promises; in another he declared that he was determined to make some figure in life, and earnestly hoped it might be under Newcastle's protection. It is odd that in revising the record of his tergiversations, he did not note those glaring inconsistencies, but there we have them in black and white. By the way, when he talked so pathetically of his approaching end he was but sixty-three, and tolerably vigorous. Perhaps he was foolish not to persevere in his policy of bluff and apparent defiance; but the poor man can hardly be blamed, for crawling was his natural attitude. He did his best to atone for his outbreak of temper by continuing his court to Newcastle with redoubled assiduity, but he took his revenge for the Judas embrace by abusing him freely to the Princess. In fact, backbiting was the favourite weapon of political faction, and Newcastle's standing excuse for his inability to overcome the royal obduracy was that malicious scandal-mongers held the monarch's ear. Dodington goes from his Grace's levée to Leicester House, to dilate to the royal lady on 'all my memory could suggest of the wickedness, meanness, cowardice, and baseness of the Duke of Newcastle.' And this was the man to whom he had offered himself body and soul, whose friendship he had said was the highest aim of his ambition, and to whose commands he had vowed unquestioning obedience. He added that it would be a misfortune 'to continue such a creature at the head of affairs, even for an hour,' but on the whole, 'to avoid disturbance, it would be well to come to an understanding with him.' And the mother of the heir, who was equally disinterested, 'signified her entire approbation.' Then Dodington, who had a knack of betraying himself when posing as most patriotic, summed up his malignant abuse of the Duke of Newcastle by saying 'he had not endeavoured to oblige one efficient man.'

George heartily despised him, and showed it, and it increases our respect for the sturdy King. But the strange thing with this

remarkable man is that he was treated with marked consideration by all the leading statesmen. It emphasizes our suggestion that he would really have done better had he been regardful of his self-respect. But the toleration of his servility was a sign of the times. Encouraged by the Princess, he went about caballing and devising new combinations to shake Newcastle's supremacy. He goes to the country to meet the malcontent Halifax, and dangles the Seals before his eyes. He has long and confidential talks with the austere and cynical Temple. Both Fox and Pitt came to call at his house, and of the two, the haughty leader who was to awe the House with a frown, seems to have unbosomed himself the more unreservedly. At any rate he chimed in with the abuse of Newcastle, saying bluntly that the Duke was a very great liar. Yet we must remember that reports from memory may be inexact, and that it is Dodington who constitutes himself reporter. Pitt did not fall upon his neck, but he was even more complimentary than the Duke. He said, 'he thought me of the greatest consequence; no man in the country would be more listened to, &c., &c.; that he was most desirous to unite himself with me in the strictest manner, for he ever had the highest regard for my abilities.' There could not be a more handsome tribute, but it reads rather like Dodington than Pitt. Newcastle would seem to have got scent of these intrigues—in fact, he had his spies in all directions—and thought it high time that a bargain should be clenched. Doubtless Dodington, probably through Lord Halifax, had intimations of the Minister's kindly intentions, so by a clever *coup*, though strongly pressed, he refused to support the Russian subsidy. That was a question of supreme importance, and it brought matters to a crisis. Under Ministerial pressure the King's obduracy gave way, and shortly afterwards the Duke, 'with many assurances of confidential friendship, told me he had the King's permission to offer me the Treasury of the Navy.' Needless to say that the offer was jumped at, though it had its embarrassments. He was bound to palliate his defection at Leicester House, 'where her Royal Highness received me very coolly.'

Then there are some curious lights on Cabinet secrets. Newcastle was in mortal terror at the course of the war, the undecisive battle off Minorca, and the gathering storm of unpopularity that threatened to burst upon him. Fox was scarcely less apprehensive, and finds a Job's comforter in Dodington, who suggests that the Duke is on the search for a scapegoat, and very probably may

pitch upon him. The newly appointed Treasurer of the Navy chuckles over his personal immunity. The Duke pleads piteously to his colleagues, that though the city was undoubtedly in a turmoil, nobody blamed him—that the sea was not his province. Nevertheless, he had orders to go, and on November 11 he sent in his final resignation. The Duke of Devonshire accepted the Treasury, but in the following March, Newcastle was still clinging to his place, and obstinately refused to budge. He had his reasons. The King was revolting against the new Ministers, and was throwing himself on Fox to arrange an Administration. The arrangements were going swimmingly forward under the able management of that unrivalled tactician, the places had been already distributed, and Dodington assures us that he had magnanimously refused the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, and been willing to content himself with the Board of Trade. Then the scheme was exploded by an infamous breach of confidence. Dodington had babbled everything to Lord Halifax, in whose friendship he professed to believe, notwithstanding former experience; and Halifax after solemn promises of secrecy had told everything to Newcastle. Accordingly that hoary intriguer took successful measures to defeat the plan. Dodington was the more scandalised at Halifax's treachery, that before and then and ever since his Lordship spoke of the Duke as a knave and fool. In the summer of 1757, after the illusory interregnum, Newcastle was again nominally at the head of the Government, with Pitt as its commanding and controlling spirit. Newcastle took the patronage and charged himself with the corruption; Pitt was to launch the thunderbolts of war. The relations of his Grace and the Great Commoner may be estimated from an anecdote. The Duke had promised to reward his jackal Halifax with a third Secretaryship of State which would have trenched upon Pitt's prerogatives. The appointment was delayed and Halifax expostulated. The Duke avowed he had not spoken about it, because Pitt looked so much out of humour that he durst not. As for Dodington, the plotter was more grieved than surprised to find himself once more left out in the cold. Pitt intimated with haughty courtesy that, much to his regret, the place was wanted for another person, and though 'the King kept his word with Fox and made him paymaster, his Majesty was not pleased to behave so to me.'

Sir George Trevelyan, in his volume on the American war, has paid a glowing tribute to the piety, public spirit, and integrity of

Lord Dartmouth, a bright exception to the time-servers of the age. If we are to believe the story told by his intimate friend Halifax, Dartmouth was little better than the rest. Legge was in close confederacy with Pitt, but when Pitt was driving a hard bargain with the Duke, Dartmouth was persuaded to give his Grace a meeting. Admitted to Lord Dupplin's house by a back door, he sneaked out as he had come in, but a correspondence was arranged. Legge was to take office with the Duke if Pitt persisted in his demands. The Primate of Ireland was the go-between. Anxious to induce Pitt to lower his terms, the Archbishop asked him whether he were sure of his friends. The statesman demanded the explanation which the Primate had always intended to give, having got his information from Newcastle. So Legge, who had been treacherous to Pitt, having been betrayed by the Duke and sacrificed by the Archbishop, was contemptuously told by the allies he had thrown over, that he had better take the Exchequer seals if he could get them. He did take them from the Minister who had played him false and broken faith with the friends, without whom he had pledged himself not to act, 'and all for quarter-day!' is the comment of Dodington, in a line printed in Roman capitals. The unconscious self-sarcasm of the line is unsurpassable.

Pitt had turned Dodington out of office to make room for his own brother-in-law. Subsequently he succeeded in regaining the place, to be again unceremoniously expelled. It would seem that his ephemeral successes always alternated with stinging mortifications. The Diary ends abruptly in 1759, to be resumed through a few pages when he was courting the smiles of Lord Bute. It breaks off again, abruptly as before, when he was on the eve of attaining the great object of his ambition. In 1761 he was raised to the peerage by the style of Lord Melcombe of Melcombe Regis. In 1762 Lord Melcombe died, and his great property passed to his cousin. And these memoirs, be it remembered, are the 'apology' of a politician who manipulated his brief at his discretion, and may be presumed to have made the best of his case.

ALEXANDER INNES SHAND.

HUMOURS OF AN IRISH COUNTRY TOWN.

SURELY in no spot in Great Britain, village or town, can it be possible to feel so far removed from the world as in an Irish country town. That peace which the world cannot give broods over it. Mr. Froude has heard the last echo of the elder world in the church bells, which chime now as they did in the days of virtuous King Harry, who turned the monks adrift. In Cullaghmore, a county town of the Irish Midlands, no sound is heard that is peculiar to modern life, except the distant roar of the trains hurrying to Cork. One cannot believe at first that this is a mother city whither ever so many little demes look for supplies and help and government. Yet even here tradesmen can amass their piles of greasy notes, and banks and public-houses are abundant. Hither come on market-days the slow donkeys, each stiffly dragging his little cart, which resembles in miniature the huge floats that are allowed to block London streets; the proprietor, male or female, sits on each, contented to jog on half the day, and jog back as patiently as their beasts. Perhaps, like Winky Boss, they measure the distance by pipes of tobacco; though, indeed, the younger women, brave in best clothes and feathers, smoke not—only old crones do that—neither do they knit; they are happy enough in having nothing to do except twitch the reins at rising ground, until they reach the Mecca whither the heads of countless donkeys are turned. This patch of brown in the midst of long green pastures, this St. Kilda of towns, to be the eponymous capital of a county! The daily arrival of yesterday's *Times* or *Standard* keeps the feeling of isolation ever present. The fact that a reply-paid telegram will bring an answer as surely and quickly as if it were sent between St. John's Wood and Chelsea is always a fresh surprise, tending to shake the mind from its lonely moorings. The badged and belted telegraph-boy looks an alien in the place, although he also is of the tribe of Ryan. There is something incongruous about his red facings, and the red pillar-boxes, as there is about the red regiment in the barracks on the hill. Were Home Rule to come, telegraph-boys and pillar-boxes would be dressed in green, and no soldiers entertained except, perhaps, the Rifle Brigade. After all, green is a more restful

colour. All God's works here are green or drab—the land green, and the sky drab; man follows in humble imitation, for the town and its people are in drab, with parade of green on holidays.

Englishmen think of Southern Ireland, if they ever think of it in these quiet days, as always fermenting upwards into lush grass and pigs and cattle under warm everlasting rain. I know one town which can be as cheerless as the North Sea in winter. The soaking roofs cluster under a high range of hills, which lie to the south-west, cloud-capped towers with dripping sides. On the many days when the wind blows up from the Atlantic these hills extract the due moisture, and the lightened masses roll on to make way for heavier piles; from north and east there is no shelter, and the wind, rejoicing in its strength, dashes through the town and measures its force against the dark-browed hills, under which the houses seem to be forlornly cowering, like a herd of cattle that seek shelter at a hedge-side. In summer, if the morning be calm and warm, the mist rises from the valley and floats half-way up the hills, as if an intrusive locomotive was laying its white trail. Winter more often veils them in driven clouds and rain, but at rare intervals before sunset the sky clears, and the piled heights seem to have put their heads together in wonder. Through the atmosphere washed by the everlasting rain miles are as yards in your sight, and unsuspected peaks and domes crowd into the picture. Then the wind will give a gentle moan before going to work again, driving a little mist around the more distant hill-tops; turn away for five minutes, and the swimming vapour 'puts forth an arm and creeps from pine to pine,' dragging itself swiftly from hill to hill, so that when you look again the eyes turn with a shiver to the cheerful gas-lights of the little town. Yet, cold as it can be, the country-folk wear clothes which an English ploughman's lusty shuddering would soon resolve into constituent rags. Unclothed and half-fed as the children are, their bones grow long and strong, until they become the tallest men in the British Isles. This, to be sure, is by the action of that great law, which yet awaits its Dalton or Darwin, that what suits the Saxon is a misfit for the Celt, and *vice versa*. The few successes to which English administration in Ireland can point are all due to certain empirical applications of this law. Englishmen will never understand this; those that are put in authority over us learn nothing as the years advance. Because all the machinery of representative government works smoothly in

England, where the greasing of the wheels is done in secret, county councils must therefore mean justice in a land where the strongest force, social and political, is the tendency to disunion. But politics never yet thatched leaky roofs. Here in Cullaghmore the main road is lined by mud-walled cabins, which rise from mud floors that are lower than the roadway, so that the rain-water pours over the door-sill. Eyes and ears and nose are offended. The dwellers never wash themselves or their children, who shriek and swear amongst the pigs and poultry; as turf is dear they burn malodorous substitutes. The air is not redolent of the sharp peat-reek which is the sweetest smell in an Irishman's nostrils; if you have been away for a time, it is the faint smell of burning turf, as it mingles with the scent of the hedgerows, which brings close to you that you are no longer in cold, staid England, but have returned to home, sweet home. These dwellers by the wayside, children of Gibeon, have no wish to better their lot by removal; they are contented to dwell whither it has pleased God to call them, so long as He gives them the daily bread which they hate to seek and toil for. All would fain be lords of the cabin whereof their fathers were lords, and though they cannot now sing with Herrick,

Here we rejoice because no rent
We pay for our poor tenement,

the judicial rent is no more than the cabins are worth. It is a life of little ease and no comfort; they look forward to marrying their eldest son, by the matchmaker's aid, to a girl with a dowry, and then living as lodgers in the same cabin with him and his wife and a new family. The custom is kindly and thriftless, and in England would certainly lead to domestic murder, as, if Zola tells the truth, it does lead thither in France. It is a commonplace to say that the Irish flourish anywhere save in Ireland, but it is truer that there are no Irish anywhere else, for they change their minds as well as their sky when they fare across the sea, just as the potato, if planted in a tropical climate, becomes something other than itself. So for all those who live therein God may have made a better place than Cullaghmore, but doubtless never did.

In an English town there is always a middle class, upper and lower, between which sections there is a great gulf fixed, good people who are unwearied in providing occupation for their neighbours, and amusements small but dear. Amongst them bazaars and sales of work, organ recitals and temperance lectures flourish,

with much talk of improving one's mind, much talk of doing things for religion's sake, all in a vulgar, tactless kind of way. Except in the three great towns, Ireland has no middle class of this kind, and pays dearly enough for the lack. These people are those who do most of the work in England, are indefatigable at committees and boards, and see that public works are not executed to undue private advantage; they constitute public opinion. No one should blame them because their first motive is self-advertisement; they are too useful to be discouraged, and it is because of them that comfort is so much better understood in England than in Ireland. Here a man is, to speak roughly, a gentleman or a serf. A family of the latter class, if it has enough to eat, is as cheerful and improvident as if the sun always shone through the warm air, and there was no duty on whisky. Bad temper, always snarling and grumbling, is not the gloomy inheritance of Irishmen; there is none of that sullenness which makes the conversation of a workman's compartment on an English railway sound like the growling of a cage of wild beasts. The poorest labourer at work in a tattered coat under the western rain is delighted to pause and consider a strange face, whilst giving his opinion, usually wrong, upon the coming weather. In truth, the middle class in England is stupid, and the Irish peasants are clever, for a narrow education is worse than none at all. The English workman is no fool, but often sulky and brutal, and intensely suspicious of strangers; our country people are quite untrustworthy, with no sense of duty towards their neighbours, but ever so much pleasanter companions. When chance gives them the means, they drink long and gaily, having the power of swallowing the very worst whisky with appreciation and gratitude, whilst they continue to remember and venerate the name of Father Mathew. When the statue of the temperance apostle was unveiled in Dublin some years ago, crowds of people came up from the country to show their loving memory of his work; there were countless bands and banners, unlimited enthusiasm. The Dublin shops closed to show that they also were in sympathy, and after the ceremony strangers and citizens had to appease their hunger and thirst at the public-houses. The orgy in Dublin streets that night must have made Father Mathew in heaven wish that he had never lived and preached. At any rate, nobody in the country districts need ever fear being harmed or insulted by a drunken man on a fair-day or a Saturday afternoon, because, although such a person is perfectly ready to fight the

whole world, he only attacks foemen worthy of his steel, honest men who look at things in the same light as he does himself, and never make unpleasantness. The worst class of men in Ireland, the squireens, is almost extinct; there is no room for the men with a little land and less education, who thought themselves above the common farmer, were loud and dirty, and lived only for horses and whisky. The bad times were at least as bad for the lean as the fat, and the squireens went under.

The Sundays would prove best to the strange Englishman that he is in a foreign country, and knows nothing about Ireland. He will go to church on Sunday morning, at the usual time to the usual bell, and will find the building, as he thinks, empty, although, in fact, the vicar cannot count an absentee. He forgets that he is no longer on the side of the big battalions, whither Providence has so plainly called him. For the Protestants in the South of Ireland are singing the songs of Zion in a strange land. They have brought their own gods with them, as superior as everything else made in England; but the unfathomable, irresponsible Celt refuses to have anything to do with them. Those architects who built our churches had no insight into the future, or they would not have built for hundreds where ten would come. Henry VIII. might fluctuate with every wind of doctrine, and Cromwell prove how sharp was the sword of the Lord and his earthly saints, but the Irish preferred the heavenly saints whom they knew. All that was needed to make Ireland the most loving daughter of the Mother Church was the separation order from England; mother and daughter were but drawn closer together by the brute arbitrament of war. Hence it is that an Irish rector is well content if he sees fifty worshippers in a building made to hold five hundred, and counts the regular communicants on the fingers of one hand. He is not overworked on weekdays, nor knows anything of the eating cares that beset the incumbent of an English parish. Work out of church hardly exists for him. Disestablishment has rendered him certain of a moderate income, however feeble his intellect may be, at the same time as it removed all inducement for clever men to enter the Church. As living is cheap in the country, he marries and has many children. But it is a lonely life for him and his wife; there are often not half-a-dozen families whom they can visit and receive, and he must wish, idle man though he be, that he could exchange his little colony for the thousands over whom the priest exercises patriarchal sway.

A man accustomed to live in English towns, where the lower classes have no religion, is amazed at the manner in which the Roman Catholic fold brings in all its sheep. None remain outside the door, because none dare face the pains and penalties. Partly by promises, partly by threats, most of all by performance, this Church holds rich and poor alike; it can punish and reward with eternal penalties and eternal gifts; it is the greatest power below the sky, and uses its strength unmercifully. On Sunday mornings the little groups coming from the Protestant Church, all of them well dressed and comfortable, as becomes the members of an English garrison, often meet the broad wave of frieze and corduroy coming from the Catholic Church, and are filled with a feeling of pride; they are the elect, these the Gentiles; many are called, but they are the few chosen. Some pious alien in the past has built a Presbyterian church and manse; very possibly he was one of Cromwell's settlers. It is reported that the congregation numbers four; these four must be on a pinnacle of spiritual pride. The Sunday afternoons in winter must seem to the Presbyterians utter abomination. One can hardly say that the well-known horrors of a 'Continental Sunday' flourish in the rural districts of Munster, but the people are obviously unsworn to the Solemn League and Covenant. The air is full of shouts from an upland field, where the wild lads are playing a wild game called Gaelic football, which Ireland invented of her own special grace and mere motion. In this game you can play at Rugby or Association according to the exigencies of the moment; rules are unworthy of a free people, or one striving to be free. The full teams are rarely playing at the same moment, as couples are wont to retire for a few moments and settle differences while they are fresh. If the spectators are numerous, faction fights are apt to occur, as in the electrical atmosphere feuds eighty years old sometimes recur to the mind. Gruesome stories will be told you, if you like to listen, of matches in which three or four men were fairly killed, and comfortably buried without the coroner or any other foreign official being informed. But there are no other forms of Sunday amusements which might provoke Sabbatarian censure, unless poaching be an exception, and that is an ordinary everyday pursuit, whenever time can be made for it. You may easily meet in the afternoon a band of youths and dogs, carrying openly down the roads three or four rabbits or hares. The passer-by will regard them with a benevolent smile, unless he happens

to be a brutal oppressor of the poor, whose game-preserving soul is wrung by the sight. These simple sports are all that exist in the country; cricket is practically unknown, and all the summer a deep peace broods over the long grasses and pasture fields.

It is plain that a professional man who has to begin a full day's work every morning can enjoy life in these dumb, inert little Irish towns; but what of the wives and daughters? Their lives resemble that shadowy existence in Hades with which Achilles frightened generation after generation of the Greeks. They might maintain that it is better to be kitchenmaid in cities, in a poor man's house who has little to eat, than to reign a local queen. For these poor women are not even in the country; they have much of the noise and smells of town, and are yet almost lonely among two or three thousand men and women. The Protestant rector, the doctor, the banker, make up the whole middle class, and these victims of isolation usually quarrel among themselves. Their women are debarred from their proper occupation of visiting the poor and tending the sick, there are no matins and evensong to attend, and they have to fall back on themselves. Certain pastimes are in vogue from time to time. At present hockey and golf lighten the weary path, lawn-tennis being quite out of fashion, only to be tolerated in remote country gardens, whose owners have not learnt that tennis courts ought to become croquet lawns. Hockey, unhappily, can only be played in populous places; it is very difficult to get together twenty-two people who may endure each other as regards social position and religion. Golf is very popular, but lack of pence prevents most links being used in summer, as it would cost too much to keep the grass cut. Salvation has to be sought in the bicycle, and when the gains of the nineteenth century are finally weighed this will be found the greatest. All boys and girls ride in Ireland, because an intermediate system of education scatters money broadcast through the schools, most of which finds its way to the cycle manufacturers. If the resident magistrate rides a bicycle all is well, for then the footpaths are open; but the road contractors are anti-cyclists, and do their best to keep them from being profaned by anything more modern than the ass and cart. The lack of social pastimes nowadays, when two or three are gathered together, is distressing.

What delightful games our ancestors seem to have known! We are too self-conscious, it appears, to play at them, but our

maidens might at least try to revive them as weapons of offence. Perhaps some of them are too innocent for the nineteenth century, and some not innocent enough. Yet the Irish girls might be helped in the capture of a subaltern, their legitimate prey from time immemorial, by 'Barley-break, or last in hell,' by 'Draw-gloves,' or 'Fox i' th' hole.' What game was it to which Herrick invited Lucia? 'At stool-ball, Lucia, let us play.' It is worth noting that Chapman in his translation of the 'Odyssey' makes Nausicaa and her maidens play at 'stool-ball.' There could not be a better precedent. At any rate, there is little good in people meeting to say, 'Nous nous ennuyons ensemble.' The sons and brothers are, of course, in Dublin, crowding into the overcrowded professions; the girls stay at home, unless weariness drives them to be nurses. There would be a great difference if they had the priceless distraction which English girls enjoy—that of doing good to ungrateful families. But the broad-chested, bandy-legged Catholic priest allows no poaching in his covers. He, to be sure, is in no lack of society, and goes nowhere except where he takes unquestioned the highest seat. His despotic power does no harm to his subjects, but goes far to ruin the man himself. Some score of years ago there had been a family conference to determine whether Tim should be a ploughman or a priest, and when the cloth carried it over the corduroys his family put their shoulders to the wheel, so that after a weary waiting they received the patent of nobility. For as at Rome a family took place among the aristocracy if an ancestor had held curule honours, in Ireland the neighbours look reverently on the cabin that has reared a priest. They justly hold that it is no small thing to have the keys of heaven, to open and shut the door of immortal life on one's fellow-men. It is by no means so good for the priest himself, who is in danger of succumbing to ecclesiastical arrogance founded on the paltriest education. Englishmen brought up as peasants, taught at Maynooth, and entrusted with such powers, would be always unendurable; the Irish priest is not always an impossible person. Still, one would prefer not to be the National schoolmaster under him.

We have a railway running through the town, a line more than sixty miles long, which serves a rich country of deep pasture, whence long trains full of bullocks are always being shunted up and down under loud protest. At each extremity of the line are two large cities. The unpunctuality of its trains hurts no one

and irritates no one ; time is long and cheap in Ireland. Perhaps the 'Celtic melancholy,' about which so much is said, sees clearly that man, brief man, is ridiculous if he lashes himself to fury because he must wait a few minutes breathing God's good air at a country station. Modern methods have so far prevailed upon our altruistic company—that it labours not for its own selfish interests the share lists show—as to bring excursion trains to the Sunday football matches. As soon as the match is ended the train draws up into the station and stays there ; somebody on the engine blows its steam-whistle loudly to remind the passengers that they are but sojourners, and have no abiding-place in Cullaghmore. One would think the precaution unnecessary, for these lucky folk, enviously regarded by the townspeople, are asserting ostentatiously in all the public-houses that they are travellers, *bona-fide* travellers. The train slowly fills ; those that have come betimes sit down and wait a couple of hours with not an unkind thought towards guard or station-master ; when the police are of opinion that all are safely gathered in, the whistling ceases and our visitors depart. Four or five miles away the up trains stop at a little station to give in their tale of tickets before reaching a junction. On occasions a train has arrived late, so that when in the station

Sweetly over the village the bell of the Angelus sounded.

It is said that on the instant ticket-collector, guard, and porter retire to their devotions, the passengers waiting patiently, unless they be 'black Presbyterians' or Englishmen. It is part of our new Imperialistic creed to believe that the railway does away with all old-world obstacles and progress ; the Soudan will take to studying English literature and science as soon as the iron horse supersedes the camel. Ireland is one of those despised nations, 'half sullen and half wild,' who would above all things be left to themselves. The people are gentle and cheerful ; they have ever had the strangest power of winning over the stranger ; but they will neither worry nor be worried. The past stands side by side with the present ; it is not a palimpsest to be laboriously deciphered. Two miles to our east the railroad runs directly over a holy well. At the side of the embankment is a round pool, black and forbidding, fed by a never-failing spring ; here, where the trains thunder by to catch the packet-boat for England, the country people drink of the sacred water, and pray for release

from their afflictions. When going away they hang their bandages, sad fluttering rags, on the tree beside the well. Perhaps it may be likened to the tree Ygdrasil, with root fixed in heaven, or to some it may appear like to that whose time-tossed branches Æneas saw in the porch of Avernus :

*Ulmus opaca, ingens, quam sedem Somnia volgo
Vana tenere ferunt, foliisque sub omnibus hærent.*

There would have been no railways in 'Ireland for the Irish,' but they are cheerfully accepted as part of an imperfect scheme of existence. A journey to any place has the merit of giving an excuse for merry-making, and soft-skinned and thin-skinned folk have to travel first or second class. There are many skinfuls of whisky in the third-class carriages, and indeed a man needs something to cheer him when seated on a narrow cushionless ledge against a hard wooden wall. The Englishman by perseverance has made the railway companies see to his comfort ; we never persist in making ourselves unpleasant. No magistrates outside this country would have been so right-minded as those who refused to punish a local farmer for pitching out of window a man who objected to smoking, and gaily proceeded to fine the complainant for leaving a train when in motion.

Generation after generation of English people have considered Ireland as a necessary evil, a thorn in the flesh, inserted by Providence for its own good ends. The very bagmen at the country hotels feel and show that it is an inferior country to which they are selling superior articles. It would be interesting to trace the feeling with which Ireland is mentioned in English literature before the present century. The burden of complaint, the '*Quousque tandem, Catilina, abutere patientia nostra?*' may be noticed through the Elizabethan dramatists, though, indeed, Shakespeare is more generous. His honest insular hatred spent itself on the French and weasel Scots ; his love was for Italy, and to Ireland he gave neither praise nor blame. Yet we feel, especially we who live in the South, that there is no man in England, unless he be an umbrella-maker or waterproof-maker, but has reason every week to thank a careful Heaven that placed Ireland to defend England from the Atlantic. It is a national boast with Englishmen that in their climate a man can spend more days out of doors than anywhere else. They are blind to the reason. In this matter, as in some others, Ireland is England's whipping-boy. Were not this deluged island at hand to take the

moisture out of the Atlantic rain-clouds, England would be drenched with rain. The farmers would have even more pessimistic ideas on the advantage of sowing wheat, and cricket would not be the national game. Cricketers feel a little anxiety for the morrow's game when they read in the evening paper that the barometer is falling fast at Valentia; but on that morrow most of Ireland will be blotted out by the dark rain, and farmers, athletes, sportsmen foiled once again. Only so much rain as Munster, Connaught, and Leinster cannot manage between them—and their capacity is enormous and sorely tried—will pass on to England, the spoilt darling of fortune. Observe how cunningly Ireland is placed at right angles to the path of the wet south-westerners—she protects England like an umbrella held to front the wind.

ERNEST ENSOR.

IZAACK WALTON'S LIFE OF DONNE.

AN APOLOGY.

SINCE the death of Matthew Arnold there has been no literary critic to whose appearances in print the majority of educated people look forward with such assurance of satisfaction as to those of Mr. Leslie Stephen. His essays are always first-hand studies, giving the result of reading and reflection, and an insight which 'looks quite through the deeds of men,' while they are written in a style as sinewy as the thought, with no preciosity of phrase and no word to spare. If they are sometimes disappointing, it is because he sometimes elects to treat of people who interest him only on some particular side, while the rest of their character or achievement finds him cold or hostile. Such a person evidently is Donne, the famous Dean of St. Paul's, whom Mr. Stephen has lately discussed in a very brilliant article in the '*National Review*,' taking occasion by Mr. Gosse's '*Life and Letters*.' Donne was a puzzle, and therefore attractive to the psychologist, but he was also a poet and a preacher; and those people who value him in either of these aspects are not likely to rise from the perusal of Mr. Stephen's paper in a very contented frame of mind. It is, however, only incidentally about Donne that I wish to speak in this humble remonstrance; the brief I have taken up is not on his behalf, but on behalf of his biographer Izaak Walton. If I speak of Donne it will be as the facts of his life form the material of Walton's biography.

After a dubious compliment to Walton's life of Donne as a prose idyl like '*The Vicar of Wakefield*,' 'a charming narrative in which we have as little to do with the reality of Donne as with the reality of Dr. Primrose,' Mr. Stephen puts his case against the book in a sentence: 'There are two objections to the life if taken as a record of facts. The first is that the facts are all wrong, and the second that the portraiture is palpably false.' The judgment could not be more severe, and if Mr. Stephen were treating directly of Walton it would have great weight, for it would then mean that he had investigated the question of Walton's trustworthiness for himself. As it is, I incline to think he has not

done so, from the palpably false portraiture of the sentence which follows: 'As we read we imagine Walton gazing reverently from his seat at the dean in the pulpit, dazzled by a vast learning and a majestic flow of elaborate rhetoric, which seemed to the worthy tradesman to come as from an "angel in the clouds," and offering a posthumous homage as sincere and touching as that which, no doubt, engaged the condescending kindness of the great man in life.' That sentence contains a radically false view of Walton's character and capabilities, and the relations of the two men to each other. To begin with, Mr. Stephen has not, perhaps, been aware that the phrase 'an angel in the clouds'¹ is not Walton's own, but a quotation from one of Donne's poems, and is employed by Walton to express, not the preacher's relation to his flock, but the heavenly authority of his message. If that is recognised, the phrase, though it remains exaggerated, ceases to be ridiculous. Then, as for the 'worthy tradesman.' Undoubtedly Walton is often spoken of as 'worthy' by his friends, and undoubtedly he had been a 'tradesman,' but his capability of appreciating Donne is not, for all that, adequately summed up in the compound phrase; any more than the secret of the charm of the 'Compleat Angler' is conveyed in Mr. Gosse's title of the 'immortal piscatory linendraper.'² Walton's marriage register declares him to have been an ironmonger. He was a freeman of the Ironmongers' Company, of which Donne's father had once been warden; and this fact may have implied a certain freemasonry in their relations. It is more important to insist that Walton was a man of education. His handwriting is beautiful and scholarlike, and his composition (as that of Shakespeare, who was also of yeoman descent and country schooling) might put to the blush a good deal for which a university has been answerable. He was a poet, and a friend of poets. A better proof that he was not a 'worthy tradesman' in Mr. Stephen's unworthy sense is afforded by his friendship with country gentlemen of the stamp of Charles Cotton, who are not the least sensitive of men to distinctions of class, and who are not professionally obliged to meekness like the clergy, though even the Bishops of Winchester are not in the habit of offering free quarters in Farnham Castle to worthy tradesmen. A remark of Cotton's may be

¹ 'Preaching the Word so, as showed his own heart was possessed by those very thoughts and joys that he laboured to distil into others; a preacher in earnest: always preaching to himself, like an Angel from a cloud but in none.'

² Gosse's *Life of Donne*, ii. 253.

quoted as sufficient once for all to free Walton's character from any suspicion of servility: 'My father Walton will be seen twice in no man's company he does not like, and likes none but such as he believes to be very honest men, which is one of the best arguments, or at least, of the best testimonies I have, that I either am or that he thinks me one of those, seeing I have not yet found him weary of me.' Donne became Vicar of St. Dunstan's, the parish in which Walton lived, in 1624, and assuming, as we may,¹ that they became acquainted at that date, there were still seven years remaining before Donne's death, in which Walton would have had opportunities of studying his vicar from other points of view than from below the pulpit; and, indeed, their intimacy is proved by his receiving one of Donne's memorial seals,² and by his presence at Donne's bedside when he breathed his last. I plead, therefore, that Walton was a person capable of painting Donne's portrait, and with ample opportunities of studying his subject.

In the next place I will endeavour to show that the likeness is a good one; in other words that the salient facts are all right, and the character accurately drawn. In order to this, it will be convenient to desert Mr. Stephen for the moment, and turn to Mr. Gosse on whom he has relied, so as to examine any charges Donne's most recent biographer has to make against his predecessor. 'In the days of Walton,' says Mr. Gosse, 'of course what we now call conscientious biography was unknown.' Again he says, Walton's life is 'too rose-coloured and too inexact for scientific uses.'³ And again, the inaccuracies are 'so many, that it is beyond the power of mere annotation to remove them.' I cannot think that by 'conscientious biography' Mr. Gosse means what I should mean by that expression, and I do not know what the 'scientific uses' of a biography may be, so that I will not attempt any discussion on this part of his indictment; but in regard to his other charges a direct issue can be joined. I will, therefore, make a summary of the inaccuracies Mr. Gosse has pointed out in Walton, to see if they indeed transcend the power of annotation to correct, and then I will examine the question of 'rose-colour.'

1. In his account of Donne's marriage and consequent dismissal

¹ Mr. Gosse, for reasons which he does not give, 'conjectures' that Walton did not enjoy the Dean's intimacy till 1629 or 1630 (Pref. p. xii).

² Other recipients were Sir Henry Wotton, the Bishops of Norwich, Salisbury and Chichester, and George Herbert.

³ Pref. p. viii.

from Sir Thomas Egerton's secretaryship, Walton speaks of Egerton as Lord Ellesmere, which he did not become till later. Also he represents the father-in-law, Sir George More, as asking his sister, who was Egerton's wife, to interfere and get Donne discharged, whereas she died in the year before Donne's marriage. This is undoubtedly a blunder of Walton's. I suspect the appeal to Lady Egerton to effect Donne's dismissal, of which Walton must have been told, referred to the early days of Donne's courtship, and strengthens Walton's assertion, which Mr. Gosse unreasonably doubts, that Sir George More 'had some intimation' of what was going forward.

2. Walton gives the cause of Sir Robert Drury's excursion to the continent, on which Donne was his companion, as 'a sudden resolution to accompany Lord Hay on an embassy to the French King Henry IV.,' whereas it appears from Chamberlain's correspondence with Carleton that Sir Robert did not travel till the year after Henry's assassination.

3. Walton believed that the University of Cambridge gave Donne his doctor's degree with 'gladness;' but we learn from a letter of Carleton's that the Vice-Chancellor did not consent without much pressure from the King.

4. Walton misdates the *Autumnal*, a poem written by Donne upon George Herbert's mother. The point of the poem is that the lady was in the autumn of her beauty—*pulchrorum autumnus pulcher*, as Bacon says—and of this Walton is not oblivious, for he says 'both he and she were then past the meridian of man's life.' But he connects the poem with their first meeting at Oxford, which could not have been later than 1600, when Magdalen Herbert would have been only thirty-two. Mr. Gosse, it may be remarked, does some violence to the poem itself by dating it as late as 1625, when she would have been fifty-seven; for Donne himself gives fifty as the age he had in his mind for the autumn of life.

5. This must be given in Mr. Gosse's own words: 'One of the most curious facts about the life of Donne as written for us so charmingly by Izaak Walton is the extraordinary tissue of errors, circumstantially recorded, in the pages where he describes the poet's entrance into holy orders. . . . The page in which Walton describes the circumstances of Donne's ordination contains scarcely a statement which is historically correct; neither the date, nor the conditions, nor the company are those which are

given us by contemporary documents.' But immediately after these very sweeping charges Mr. Gosse adds:¹ 'And yet it is probable that in the attitude of the King to Donne, and in the conversations recorded, we may safely follow Walton. These would seem to Donne himself to be the really essential matters' (ii. 57). Certainly, and to us also. We may note, however, that for the King's attitude to Donne we are not left to the mercy of probabilities, for Donne himself in the eighth expostulation of his 'Devotions' tells us in the plainest language that the King 'first of any man conceived a hope that I might be of some use in [the] Church, and descended to an intimation, to a persuasion, almost to a solicitation that I would embrace that calling.' But to come to Mr. Gosse's apparently specific, but very puzzling charges of inaccuracy as to the 'date, conditions, and company' [?] of Donne's ordination. Date in Walton there is none at all. He says only that Donne deferred his ordination for 'almost three years' after the interview in which the King urged it; and he puts this interview at some unspecified time 'after' 1610. As Donne was ordained in January 1615, this important interview must therefore, according to Walton, have taken place in 1612. It seems to be this date that Mr. Gosse finds fault with. He has discovered a letter of December 3, 1614, in which Donne, mentioning an interview he has just had with the King at Newmarket, says: 'I have received from the King as good allowance and encouragement to pursue my purpose as I could desire.' Mr. Gosse thinks this interview must have followed immediately upon the important one referred to by Donne and Walton, which he accordingly dates 'about the 20th Nov. 1614'—*i.e.* two years later than Walton puts it.² But the supposition is altogether gratuitous; and, what is more, it does not fit the expressions of

¹ One remarkable virtue of Mr. Gosse as a biographer is his candour. I shall have in what follows to quote him against himself more than once. Another case in which his conscience has obliged him to withdraw a serious charge immediately after making it occurs in i. 96; the italics are mine: 'The complexion which Donne, *looking back from the sanctity of old age* to this period of his youth, desired to be thrown upon the *compromising* episode of his clandestine courtship is no doubt reflected by Izaak Walton. The letters of Donne from prison in 1602 confirm in the main his later recollections.' In the Preface (p. xii), where Mr. Gosse makes the same charge at greater length, he forgets to withdraw it.

² Walton's chronology is clearer in his first edition. In the second he somewhat confuses his narrative by introducing the story of Carr's summoning Donne to Theobalds into a parenthesis.

Mr. Gosse's new document, in the interest of which it is made. If Donne, after hearing the King's advice, had, as Mr. Gosse suggests, asked for a few days to think the matter over, and had then returned with his scruples for the King to overrule, he would not have spoken of receiving 'as good *allowance* to pursue *my purpose as I could desire*.' While admitting, then, that Walton's account of these events would be improved by a few dates, I cannot see that Mr. Gosse has pointed out any error in it. His own account is an imaginative piece of work, which is supported by no evidence, and breaks down where it can be tested.

6. Another accusation Mr. Gosse brings against Walton is that he overcharges the picture of the scene at the funeral sermon which Donne preached over his wife. This is what Walton says: 'His first motion from his house was to preach where his beloved wife lay buried—in St. Clement's Church, near Temple Bar, London—and his text was a part of the prophet Jeremy's Lamentation: "*Lo, I am the man that have seen affliction.*"' And, indeed, his very words and looks testified him to be truly such a man; and they, with the addition of his sighs and tears, expressed in his sermon, did so work upon the affections of his hearers as melted and moulded them into a companionable sadness.' On which Mr. Gosse comments as follows: 'The printed copy which has come down to us says that it was delivered at St. Dunstan's. . . . An examination of the sermon itself reveals no such emotional or hysterical appeals to sympathy as the sentimental genius of Walton conceived.' But surely it does not follow, because Donne preached on this text ten years later when he was vicar of St. Dunstan's, that he may not have preached on it at St. Clement Dane's, especially as the sermon there was probably not written down. That Donne was likely to apply the passage in *Lamentations* to himself we may see from his poetical version of it. And it is uncritical to charge Donne's tears upon Walton's sentimentality, when Walton tells us in his 'Life of Herbert' that *he saw Donne weep and preach* [Lady Danvers's] funeral sermon' in 1627. If Donne wept at his friend's sermon of commemoration he may be credited with weeping at his wife's.

7. Walton thought Donne succeeded Dr. Gataker as Preacher at Lincoln's Inn, but Dr. Holloway came in between.

8. Mr. Gosse dismisses as incredible Walton's story, that Donne was offered fourteen benefices 'in the first year of his entering into

sacred orders;' but we know that several were offered to Nicholas Ferrar when he was made deacon, and Donne had many friends.¹

Such then being Walton's alleged errors, some of which are proved, it will be seen that these are of the sort which were inevitable when there were no dictionaries for verifying dates within reach of the hand; and there is nothing in them 'beyond the power of mere annotation to remove.' They do not affect the portrait. The further question remains, whether Walton has not robbed that of its truthfulness by a lavish use of madder, or by leaving out 'the warts.' Mr. Gosse thinks he has; and his charges in this respect must now be considered.

1. 'Walton in his exquisite portrait of his friend has nothing at all to say of the stormy and profane youth which led up to that holy maturity of faith and unction. He chose to ignore or to forget anything which might seem to dim the sacred lustre of the exemplary Dean of St. Paul's.' That is a categorical statement; but, having made it, Mr. Gosse's literary conscience turns restlessly in its dreams, and he adds: 'Yet even Walton admitted that Donne "was by nature highly passionate," and doubtless he was well aware that below the sanctity of his age lay a youth scored with frailty and the injuries of instinct' (i. 63). *Doubtless he was well aware!* It is not till sixteen pages further on that Mr. Gosse's conscience quite wakes up and he quotes from Walton what Walton himself says about Donne's youth:

'It is a truth that in his *penitential* years viewing some of those pieces that had been loosely (*God knows too loosely*) scattered in his youth, he wished they had been abortive, or so short-lived that his own eyes had witnessed their funerals.' To call a man's age 'penitential,' if words have any meaning, is not 'to ignore' his youth, but to sharply characterise it. But this is not all that Walton has to say about it. He characterises it in still plainer terms to all persons of education in the following sentence: 'Now the English Church had gained a second St. Austin; for *I think none was so like him before his conversion, none so like St. Ambrose after it; and if his youth had the infirmities of the one, his age had the excellencies of the other.*'

¹ There is good reason for always, in such cases, giving Walton the benefit of any doubt. It used to be said, for example (as by Dr. Gardiner, vii. 268), that Walton was misinformed in his assertion that George Herbert took deacon's orders some years before he became rector of Bemerton. But in 1893 documents were discovered which showed him to have been ordained deacon in 1626 and priest in 1630.

He also contrasts Donne's position as Preacher at Lincoln's Inn with his wild conduct there as a student :

In this time of sadness he was importuned by the grave Benchers of Lincoln's Inn, who were once the companions and friends of his youth, to accept of their Lecture—of which he accepted, being most glad to renew his intermitted friendship with those whom he so much loved, and where he had been a Saul,—though not to persecute Christianity or to deride it, *yet in his irregular youth to neglect the visible practice of it*, there to become a Paul, and preach salvation to his beloved brethren.

And even that is not all, for Walton records the reason that Donne himself gave to Morton, afterwards Bishop of Durham, for declining to take orders in 1607 :

I dare make so dear a friend as you are my confessor. Some *irregularities* of my life have been so visible to some men, that though I have, I thank God, made my peace with Him by *penitential resolutions* against them, and by the assistance of His grace banished them my affections, yet this which God knows to be so, is not so visible to man, as to free me from their censures, and it may be that sacred calling from a dishonour.

It seems to me that a biographer could not be expected to go further than this in laying in the shadows. But how was he to do so even if he wished ? Mr. Gosse has elected to go further by treating the 'loose' poems of Donne's youth as biographical material, and has fared worse by discovering a mare's nest.¹

2. A second wart that Mr. Gosse has represented in realistic colours is the story of Donne's relations with the King's favourite, Carr, Earl of Somerset. Probably all that Walton knew of these relations was the story already referred to, which he added in his second edition, of Carr's summoning Donne to Court and promising him the vacant place of Clerk to the Council. Mr. Gosse, following Dr. Jessopp,² has printed several letters from Donne to Somerset, which leave no doubt that Donne sought his patronage and accepted his pay ; and that Carr for a time deterred him from taking orders by the promise of some diplomatic appointment. Now these are undoubtedly new facts. But how do they affect Walton's portrait ? Already in Walton, Carr figures as a patron, and as patron seeking to dispense lay preferment, while the King insists that any preferment Donne receives shall be clerical. Mr. Gosse's accusation of having devilled for

¹ See *Spectator*, Nov. 11, 1899.

² *Life of Donne (Leaders of Religion series)*, an excellent sketch. See pp. 74, 81.

Somerset in the miserable business of the Essex divorce has been already shown by a writer in the 'Athenæum'¹ to rest upon a confusion with Sir Daniel Donne, the Dean of Arches.

3. A third accusation that Mr. Gosse makes against Donne, of which Walton certainly gives no hint, is that he took orders from unworthy motives. Mr. Gosse does not hold that all Donne's clerical life was a sham; he believes that his wife's death two years after his ordination had a transfiguring effect upon his character. In this matter I confess to preferring the psychology of Mr. Stephen. 'In 1617,' he says, 'the patient suffering wife was taken from him; and Donne was a man to feel the whole force of the blow. Preferments and success and life itself, he knew too well, would be henceforth sad and colourless.' That seems to me to express exactly the effect a loss of the kind would have upon a middle-aged man of the character Mr. Gosse describes. It would take the taste out of success, but it would not make him a saint; and Mr. Stephen consistently holds that Donne never was a saint, or anything near it. Mr. Gosse's evidence for his view, as he resumes it in the 'Athenæum' (9 Dec. 1899), is as follows: 'In every word that I find written by or about² Donne from January 1615 to the winter of 1617, I discover a decency, but no ardour; a conventional piety, but no holy zeal; no experience of spiritual joy; no humility before God. After the death of his wife I find all these gifts in their full fruition. I am therefore forced to conclude that in the winter of 1617 Donne passed through a crisis of what is called "conversion;" that he became sanctified and illuminated in a sense in which he had not been sanctified before.' Well, that seems a plain enough statement; the only difficulty in examining it lies

¹ *Athenæum*, Dec. 16, 1899. It is almost incredible that the sole basis for Mr. Gosse's very serious charge should be the following reference in Hist. MSS. Comm. 8th Report, pt. iii. p. 22b: 'Earl of Ashburnham's MSS. No. 95. Miscellaneous legal collections. A quarto of 300 written pages of the reign of Charles II., containing amongst other matters *Dr. Donne's* compendium of the whole course of proceeding in the nullity of the marriage of the Earl of Essex and the Lady Frances Howard, 1613.' Happily, the compendium exists among the Harleian MSS. (39 f. 416). Mr. Gosse, though he gives the reference (ii. 28), does not seem to have looked at the MS., which is headed 'A discourse written by Sr. Daniell Dunn, doctor of the civill lawe.'

² I take 'about' to be a rhetorical flourish. At any rate, the sole contemporary reference to Donne for that period quoted by Mr. Gosse is a rude sneer in a letter of John Chamberlain, the Horace Walpole of those days, which Mr. Gosse himself deprecates (ii. 84).

in the paucity of literary matter that can safely be attributed to that interval. I have shown elsewhere¹ that the letters to Donne's private friends assigned by Mr. Gosse to those years must be earlier. There remains however a letter to his mother 'comforting her after the death of her daughter' (Gosse, ii. 88). That letter is altogether too sacred to bandy about in controversy, but a critic who should label it 'conventional' and 'decent' would put himself out of court. I can only think that it had slipped Mr. Gosse's memory as he wrote. Of sermons before Mrs. Donne's death there remain very few—one preached in 1615, one in 1616, and two or perhaps three in the early part of 1617. Now sermon-writing is an art, which, like any other, requires time and practice for its acquirement; and when a man takes orders late in life, however skilful he may have been in other ways, he finds he has to serve an apprenticeship to his new craft. One notices this in school-masters who take orders. As was to be anticipated, then, Donne's earliest sermons are somewhat stiff and over-methodical—too full of divisions, of authorities, of illustrations from Donne's legal learning. Still they are not wanting in passages of as earnest a piety as we find later. I had marked certain places to extract when I came upon a passage in Mr. Gosse's book (ii. 115) which acquitted me of the labour, for with his usual candour he characterises one of them—that preached at St. Paul's Cross March 24, 1617—as 'a singularly dignified and impassioned appeal for purity and cleanness of heart.' Now, if an impassioned appeal for purity is to be reckoned 'conventional piety,' the more of such conventions we have the better. Before passing from this subject of Donne's alleged conversion in the winter of 1617, I may point out that the 'Holy Sonnets' which Mr. Gosse assigns to that date, lend no support to his theory. Mr. Gosse says they 'attribute his condition of mind, softened and crushed so as to receive the impress of God's signet, to the agony caused by his bereavement.'² But here, as earlier in his memoir,³ Mr. Gosse has allowed his theories to blind him to the plain meaning of words, and his paraphrases cannot be accepted.

The following is the sonnet Mr. Gosse has in mind:

O! might those sighs and tears return again
 Into my breast and eyes, which I have spent,
 That I might in this holy discontent
 Mourn with some fruit, as I have mourned in vain.

¹ *Athenæum*, Dec. 2, 1899.

² Gosse, ii. 107.

³ *Ibid.* i. 70.

In my idolatry what showers of rain
 Mine eyes did waste ? what grief my heart did rent ?
 That sufferance was my sin, now I repent
 Because I *did* suffer, I *must* suffer, pain.
 Th' hydroptic drunkard, and night-scouting thief,
 The itchy letcher, and self-tickling proud,
 Have the remembrance of past joys for relief
 Of coming ills. To poor me is allowed
 No ease ; for long yet vehement grief hath been
 Th' effect and cause, the punishment and sin.

The general sense is that in old days he wept long and vehemently in his passions of unholy love, but such weeping was sin, and though it was also suffering it must be punished by more suffering, namely, long and vehement sorrow for his sin. And he expresses the wish that all the tears he once spent so idly might be returned to him, to be spent now with profit. Mr. Gosse however paraphrases as follows : 'He fears lest this natural affection [for his wife] may have taken an excessive fleshly form, may have been "idolatry." Yet this temporal sorrow has wrought in him a "holy discontent," which is obviously salutary.' I do not think this paraphrase will commend itself: it is enough to say against it that 'in my idolatry' must be construed as the same phrase in the thirteenth sonnet :—

'as in my idolatry,
 I said to all my profane mistresses,' &c.

There is one sonnet, it should be mentioned, first printed by Mr. Gosse, which does make clear mention of Donne's wife, but it attributes Donne's conversion to her influence in life, not to grief at her death :

Since she whom I loved hath paid her last debt
 To Nature, and to her's and my good is dead,
 And her soul early into heaven vanished,
 Wholly on heavenly things my mind is set.
Here the admiring her my mind did whet
To seek thee, God ; so streams do show their head :
 But tho' I have found thee, and Thou my thirst hast fed,
 A holy thirsty dropsy melts me yet.

I must say, then, that I do not think Mr. Gosse has made out his case for any such fundamental change as he describes in Donne, subsequent to and in consequence of his wife's death. Walton's picture of the effect of that blow, the greatest that can befall any man, is far more convincing. And if this theory of Mr. Gosse's, like his other novelties, falls to the ground, it

follows that while his volumes must always be valuable for their work upon the letters, and the critical essays with which they conclude, we must still betake ourselves for a portrait of the 'real Donne' to the unconscious and unscientific Walton.

It remains to enquire whether Mr. Stephen, in places where he is not merely following Mr. Gosse, but giving his own independent judgment, supplies any adequate reasons for doubting Walton's skill as a draughtsman. Mr. Stephen makes two or three criticisms about which a word must be said.

1. The first concerns Walton's comment upon Donne's marriage. I quote from Mr. Stephen. "'His marriage,' says the worthy Walton, 'was the remarkable error of his life.'" In spite of his ability in maintaining paradoxes, he was "very far from justifying it," and, indeed, "would occasionally condemn himself for it." To us who are at a different point of view, it is the one passage in Donne's life which gives us an unequivocal reason for loving him.' Having administered this snub to poor Walton, Mr. Stephen goes on himself to qualify Donne's marriage as a 'clandestine match with a girl of sixteen who lived in his patron's house.' Now, it is perfectly evident in the context that the 'worthy Walton' means exactly what Mr. Stephen means, that it was an indefensible error to make a clandestine match with your patron's ward, an error that in the event drew after it a life-long misery. Walton recognises, as heartily as Mr. Stephen, that Donne's love was no error. He says of him in one place, 'He—I dare not say *unhappily*—fell into such a liking, as with her approbation increased into a love;' and in another place, 'God blessed them with so mutual and cordial affections as in the midst of their sufferings made their bread of sorrow taste more pleasantly than the banquets of *dull and low-spirited people*.' Thus the 'worthy Walton.' Could even Mr. Stephen have put the point better?

2. A second criticism concerns Walton's report of the reasons which Morton alleged were given him by Donne for declining his advice to take orders in 1607; they have been in part quoted above (page 256). Mr. Gosse will not accept them because they interfere with his theory that Donne had no religion till ten years later; Mr. Stephen will not accept them, partly because he thinks Morton's account too circumstantial to be true¹—'The more

¹ Walton tells us that Morton was ninety-four in 1658, when he was preparing his second edition of Donne's Life; he does not say he was ninety-four when he

“circumstantial” an old gentleman of ninety-four is about events half a century old, the less I believe in his exactness’—partly because he considers Donne’s reason was merely the fear of adverse comment—‘His obvious thirst for sympathy and respect would naturally make him shrink from a step certain to be misinterpreted; if, indeed, we should not rather say, to be too truly interpreted.’ A sufficient answer to which speculation seems to be, first, that though old men forget, their memory is always more accurate about events half a century old than about those nearer their own age; and the kind of thing an old man would not forget would be the reason his brilliant young friend had given him for not taking his advice; and secondly, that though Donne no doubt dreaded adverse comment, for according to the account in question he said so (and we know that when he did take orders, it came as he foresaw), there is nothing, except the resolute refusal to allow Donne any religion, to show that the other reasons he gave had not equal weight with him. I confess I cannot help wondering at a critic of Mr. Stephen’s exactness following Mr. Gosse so trustfully as to say, apparently on no authority but his, that at this time Donne ‘showed but little religious feeling.’ For it happens curiously enough to be a time at which we have unusual and quite remarkable evidence of his religious feeling. First of all there are a series of private letters to his most intimate friend Sir Henry Goodyer, from whom nothing was to be gained by any pose, which show, if words mean anything, a very real earnestness. Here is a passage from one written in 1607 :

‘You know I never fettered nor imprisoned the word religion, not straitening it friarly *ad religiones factitias* as the Romans call well their orders of *religion*, not immuring it in a Rome, or a Wittenburg, or a Geneva; they are all virtual beams of one sun, and wheresoever they find clay hearts, they harden them and moulder them into dust; and they entender and mollify waxen. . . Religion is Christianity, which being too spiritual to be seen by us, doth therefore take an apparent body of good life and works; so salvation requires an honest Christian. These are the two elements; and he which is elemented from these hath the complexion of a good man and a fit friend.’

Here is a passage upon controversy :

‘To you that are not easily scandalised, and in whom, I hope, neither my gave him this report. The probability is rather that corrections and additional facts would be communicated to Walton immediately after the appearance of his first edition in 1640, when Morton would have been only seventy-six; and at seventy-six bishops are credible witnesses.

religion nor morality can suffer, I dare write my opinion of that book [a book of controversy on the Anglican side] in whose bowels you left me. It hath refreshed and given new justice to my ordinary complaint, that the divines of these times are become mere advocates, as though religion were a temporal inheritance; they plead for it with all sophistications and illusions and forgeries, and herein are they likeliest advocates, that though they be feed by the way with dignities and other recompenses, yet that for which they plead is none of theirs. *They write for religion without it.*

Here is a passage about a gentleman's sudden death :

'A chaplain came up to him, to whom he delivered an account of his understanding, and I hope, of his belief, and soon after died. Perchance his life needed a longer sickness, but a man may go faster and safer when he enjoys that daylight of a clear and sound understanding than in the night or twilight of an ague or other disease. And the grace of Almighty God doth everything suddenly and hastily except depart from us; it enlightens us, warms us, feasts us, ravishes us at once. Such a medicine, I fear, his inconsideration needed, and I hope as confidently that he had it.'

And here is a salutation at the close of a letter from his sick bed :

'Sir, you would pity me if you saw me write, and therefore will pardon me if I write no more; my pain hath drawn my head so much awry, and holds it so that mine eye cannot follow mine hand. I receive you therefore into my prayers with mine own weary soul, and commend myself to yours.'

These passages are all from letters to Sir Henry Goodyer in the years 1607-8. Milton tells us that only one eye can penetrate hypocrisy, and no one, therefore, can assert that these passages may not be the well-turned periods of a hypocrite; but hypocrisy has some end to serve, and until I can be shown what end it could serve in Donne's case, I shall believe that he was writing to his dearest friend what was really in his heart. In addition to these letters to Sir Henry Goodyer we have one of July 11, 1607, to George Herbert's mother enclosing certain 'holy hymns and sonnets.' Walton tells us that the hymns even in his day were lost, but says nothing as to the sonnets. They may have been some of those which we still possess, for no ingenuity can fit these into a series. As Mr. Gosse, however, dates them all after 1617, I will not contest the point, which cannot be determined, but will instance instead some verses which he himself allows to be of this time, and censures as 'frigid,' as 'ingenious exercises in metrical theology,' 'clever,' but 'without unction.' As one of them, the 'Litany,' was composed on what Donne took to be his deathbed, we may hesitate to accept

Mr. Gosse's description.¹ But as in any case it would be impolite, as well as futile, merely to put my opinion against his, I will call in Dr. George MacDonald, who in questions of religious poetry is the best critic we have. It happens that the very poem, that on 'The Resurrection,' which Mr. Gosse picks out for censure, Dr. MacDonald chooses as a specimen 'of Donne's best, and at the same time of his most characteristic mode of presenting fine thoughts grotesquely attired.'² Especially he notices the line,

He was all gold when he lay down, but rose
All tincture,³

which so offends Mr. Gosse (i. 264), as 'almost grand;' and we may add that if the use of so chemical a figure is to convict Donne of a want of genuine religious feeling, it must be allowed the same efficacy against George Herbert who borrows it.

3. A further criticism of Mr. Stephen's relates to the change which, according to Walton, came over Donne at his ordination. Mr. Stephen seems to understand Walton to say that the change was something miraculous. 'Donne,' says Mr. Stephen, 'the wit, the poet, and the courtier, was transformed at a bound into the saint, and a burning and shining light of the Church. Are we to reduce or qualify this ardent panegyric? It shows what Donne became in the eyes of Walton. Was there a corresponding change in the man himself?' It will be safer in answering Mr. Stephen's question to have the whole 'ardent panegyric' before us in Walton's own words. He says:

'And now all his studies, which had been occasionally diffused, were all centered in Divinity. *Now he had a new calling, new thoughts, and a new employment for his wit and eloquence. Now all his earthly affections were changed into divine love; and all the faculties of his own soul were engaged in the conversion of others;* in preaching the glad tidings of remission to repentant sinners and peace to each troubled soul. To these he applied himself with all care and

¹ It may be interesting to see how the 'Litany' impressed a contemporary. Izaak Walton writes of it:

Did he—fit for such penitents as she
And he to use—leave us a Litany
Which all devout men love, and doubtless shall,
As times grow better, grow more classical?

² *England's Antiphon*, p. 124.

³ *Tincture* was a substance which could transmute baser metals into gold; so that the sense of the line is, in Dr. MacDonald's words, 'Entirely good when he died, he was something yet greater when he rose, for he had gained the power of making others good.'

diligence; and now such a change was wrought in him, that he could say with David, O how amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord God of Hosts! Now he declared openly that when he required a temporal, God gave him a spiritual blessing. And that he was now gladder to be a doorkeeper in the House of God than he could be to enjoy the noblest of all temporal employments.'

Of this 'panegyric,' which is really no panegyric at all, Mr. Stephen quotes only the sentences I have italicised. I do not think even by themselves they could bear the interpretation he puts upon them.¹ Certainly in their context they cannot. There is no suggestion that Donne was 'transformed at a bound into the saint.' The change described is a change not of character but of interest and employment. Like George Herbert afterwards, Donne had thought that his talents would find their best scope in some secular office; but also, like Herbert, when he made up his mind to take orders, he threw himself into his new calling heart and soul, and soon found that it suited his powers better than he had feared. He did not regret his decision, but was thankful for it, though it was come to with some reluctance. That is all that Walton says. Mr. Stephen's criticism would really imply that there is no such thing as a religious layman.

4. Perhaps the unkindest cut that Mr. Stephen makes at Donne's character is to twit him with his dependence upon patronage and his keen eye for the main chance. Of course Mr. Stephen says nothing brutal. He is a master of the art of damning with the faintest possible dispraise; and recommends to mercy in the very act of putting on the black cap. He knows all the facts, makes every allowance, acknowledges that the seventeenth-century conditions of life differed from our own, and that Donne's 'prospects depended entirely upon his power of attracting patrons,' and yet, for all he can do, his virtue will ooze out of him in such sentences as 'the story is not altogether attractive,' 'a process which involved some trial of self-respect,' 'the weakness becomes something worse.' Let us recall the facts. Here was a man, by birth and breeding a gentleman, thrown upon the world by an imprudent marriage; trained for the law but far more interested in theology, and yet by his Romanist antecedents and also by a wild youth held back from taking orders; how was he to live? He was a poet, but poetry had no market. There were then no reviews to edit or write in. The only possible chance was to obtain some private

¹ Perhaps Mr. Stephen understood *divine love* to mean 'love of God,' but the context shows the sense to be 'spiritual affection for men.'

post from a private patron, or some public post by conciliating the King's favourite courtier. Pride should have withheld him? What right has a man to pride who has a wife and seven children? But he did dirty work for Somerset! No, that is a fable of Mr. Gosse's, which it will take long to kill, especially as the reviewers have already distributed it over the literary world. At least he wrote two panegyrics in memory of a young girl whom he had never seen? That is true; they are hyperbole run mad, so mad that they cease to be panegyrics of any human being; but though Donne's eccentric taste in writing them may be censured, no moral blame can be imputed. They were his rent to the girl's father for house and home; and they contain some of the finest lines in the English language. Surely the only allowable attitude to insufferable dependence of this sort is pity.

Full little knowest thou, that hast not tried,
 What hell it is in suing long to bide,
 To lose good days that might be better spent,
 To waste long nights in pensive discontent;
 To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow,
 To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow;
 To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares;
 To eat thy heart through comfortless despairs;
 To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
 To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.

Spenser, who wrote that in the comparatively spacious days of Queen Elizabeth, was certainly more fortunate than Donne in the type of courtier upon whom he depended, but he was every bit as dependent as Donne and liked dependence as little, and was as much or as little to blame for its necessity. In those days nothing but a private fortune could keep a man's back as erect as he would have wished it to be, and as Mr. Stephen and every one else would wish it to have been.

After Donne took orders, Mr. Stephen's high moral superiority over the poor courtier's effort to keep his family from starvation becomes reinforced by the perennial layman's sneer at the mercenariness of the clergy. 'Donne,' he says, 'did not throw over the world to retire to a cloister. He accepted preferments, and though we must of course admit the normal reference to the "standard of the age," he does not appear to have been more or less averse than other clergymen of the day to a comfortable addition to his income involving no increase of duty. [I take it that by 'income'

Mr. Stephen means professional income.] According to one of Walton's anecdotes, he rejected a profitable bargain, because it involved something like sacrilege. *But Donne oddly adds, that he rejects it because he is dangerously ill, and will thankfully accept it if he recovers.* Oddly, indeed! If Mr. Stephen's contempt for Walton and readiness to believe any meanness of Donne had permitted him to read a second time the anecdote to which he refers, he must have seen that he had completely failed to understand it; and if he had understood it he would have seen that he might have cancelled his admission of 'the normal reference to the standard of the age;' since the only point of the anecdote is that Donne was more averse than other clergymen of his day to drawing professional payment for services which he did not render. The story is this. A lease of some property belonging to the Canons of St. Paul's had fallen in, and the amount of the fine to be paid for its renewal was under discussion, when Donne fell ill. As the tenant was well-to-do, the Chapter (including Donne) had rejected his first offer as inadequate; but when the seriousness of Donne's illness was known, the senior Canon came to him (for Donne, it must be remembered, was a residentiary Canon as well as Dean, and so pecuniarily interested in the question), suggesting that the proposed fine should be accepted if the tenant could not at once be induced to increase it, rather than Donne's chance of sharing in it should be imperilled by prolonging the negotiation. We have to bear in mind that the value of property then lay much more in these fines than in the rent, which was usually low; so that while it would have been undoubtedly generous of the remaining Residentiaries to abate some of their claim rather than Donne's estate should suffer, it would not have been unreasonable in Donne to have expected them to do so. Donne, however, declined the offer, on the ground that to accept it would be (for him) of the nature of sacrilege; not, of course, in the ordinary sense of the word, in which it means the holding of Church estate by laymen, but in a sense of Donne's own. He had asked himself, so he told Dr. King, who came with the proposal, what the primitive clergy meant by *their* dread of committing sacrilege, and the answer he had given himself was 'It is sacrilege to accept Church emolument without performing service for it.' Of course Donne would mean by deputy, if not in person. In this case, if he should not recover, he would be receiving the money not for himself, but for his heirs, who could do no service

in the cathedral. But all this is quite obvious on the surface of the anecdote, and how both Mr. Gosse and Mr. Stephen should have entirely missed it is very puzzling. The passage from Walton is too long to quote, but the reader should turn to it not only to convince himself that I have accurately summarised it, but also for the sake of the proof it affords that Donne, notwithstanding that he had, as Mr. Stephen says, 'accepted preferments,' had not very effectually feathered his nest. I think he will agree that the very ring of the words ought to have saved Donne from the shameful imputation of being ready to commit sacrilege as soon as he was well enough.¹ I may add that the anecdote must have come from Dr. King himself, who, when Bishop of Chichester, signs himself in a letter to Walton 'Your ever faithful and affectionate old friend.'

There are not a few other points in Mr. Stephen's picture of Donne to which exception might be taken. For example, the exaggerated reverence of the Jacobean clergy for the King is not a matter that can be dismissed in a sentence with a light suggestion of insincerity; its explanation lies a good deal in the substitution of the Royal for the Papal supremacy as the keystone of the ecclesiastical building; but in those days kings were almost worshipped even by laymen. Is it quite fair, too, because in a sermon on the text 'He that loveth pureness of heart, the king shall be his friend,' Donne presses purity on the courtiers before him, not only on the highest grounds, but as a recommendation for the service of the State, to turn round on him and say, 'Nobody knew better than Donne what was the moral purity of the favourites who had been rewarded by James's friendship'? We are too apt to suppose that all the information we have now gleaned from State papers and private letters and memoirs was at the service of those who lived in the thick of the events. It would be a hard matter to prove Donne's acquaintance with the character of Somerset before his fall. That in his youth Donne wrote general satires against the Court proves nothing. But allowing him to have been exceptionally well informed, could he have found a better text than this for preaching at King as well as courtiers without risk of treason?

¹ *I dare not now upon my sick-bed, when Almighty God hath made me useless to the service of the Church, make any advantages out of it. But if He shall again restore me to such a degree of health as again to serve at His altar I shall then gladly take the reward which the bountiful benefactors of this church have designed me.*

This apology, however, is already too long, and I must only slightly touch upon the final point in which Mr. Stephen is inclined to doubt Walton's testimony, especially as he does so with unusual diffidence. Referring to Walton's description of Donne's preaching, he says, 'Such performances might be amazing feats of intellectual juggling; but could they produce "raptures" and "tears"? I can manage to believe it, though I confess I have rather to take it on trust.' Mr. Stephen's analysis of the merits of these sermons on the intellectual side, the contrast he suggests with the poems, and with the sermons of Andrewes and Taylor, his clear description of the qualities of their style, their rhetorical devices, their analogies, their subtleties and eccentricities, not least their melancholy, go to form by far the best criticism they have yet received. And Mr. Stephen does not altogether shut his eyes to their deeper merits, though he dwells with more zest upon their defects. He allows Donne 'depth of feeling;' he admits that occasional passages 'glow with genuine fire.' But though he refers to the famous peroration of the seventy-sixth sermon, he does not recognise that the amazing force of that passage does not lie in its rhetoric, or even in its emotion, but in the imaginative intensity with which it realises the being of God. This, in a word, is the secret of Donne's effect. A preacher with a faith in God that is hardly removed from sight cannot fail of conveying his belief to his audience; even though the matter in hand may have been dry and metaphysical, an emphasis, a parenthesis, which in print attract no attention, may in speaking have had the effect of a revelation; for a fire that is always smouldering will sooner or later break out. That seems to be the secret of the 'tears' and 'raptures' that were at the command of the crabbed Donne, and were not at the command of the rich eloquence and graceful fancy of Jeremy Taylor.

H. C. BEECHING.

THE ISLE OF UNREST.¹

BY HENRY SETON MERRIMAN.

AUTHOR OF 'THE SOWERS,' 'WITH EDGED TOOLS,' 'IN KEDAR'S TENTS,' ETC.

CHAPTER IV.

A TOSS-UP.

'One can be but what one is born.'

If any one had asked the Count Lory de Vasselot who and what he was, he would probably have answered that he was a member of the English Jockey Club. For he held that that distinction conferred greater honour upon him than the accident of his birth, which enabled him to claim for grandfather the first Count de Vasselot, one of Murat's aides-de-camp, a brilliant, dashing cavalry officer, a boyhood's friend of the great Napoleon. Lory de Vasselot was, moreover, a cavalry officer himself, but had not taken part in any of the enterprises of an emperor who held that to govern Frenchmen it is necessary to provide them with a war every four years.

'Bon Dieu!' he told his friends, 'I did not sleep for two nights after I was elected to that great club.'

Lory de Vasselot, moreover, did his best to live up to his position. He never, for instance, had his clothes made in Paris. His very gloves came from a little shop in Newmarket, where only the seamiest and clumsiest of hand-coverings are provided, and horn buttons are a *sine quâ non*.

To desire to be mistaken for an Englishman is a sure sign that you belong to the very best Parisian set, and Lory de Vasselot's position was an enviable one, for so long as he kept his hat on and stood quite still and did not speak, he might easily have been some one connected with the British turf. It must, of course, be understood that the similitude of de Vasselot's desire was only an outward one. We all think that every other nation would fain be English, but as all other countries have a like pitying contempt for us, there is perhaps no harm done. And it

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is to be presumed that if some candid friend were to tell de Vasselot that the moment he uncovered his hair, or opened his lips, or made a single movement, he was hopelessly and unmistakably French from top to toe, he would not have been sorely distressed.

It will be remembered that the Third Napoleon—the last of that strange dynasty—raised himself to the Imperial throne—made himself, indeed, the most powerful monarch in Europe—by statecraft, and not by power of sword. With the magic of his name he touched the heart of the most impetuous people in the world, and upon the uncertain, and, as it is whispered, not always honest suffrage of the plebiscite, climbed to the unstable height of despotism. For years he ruled France with a sort of careless cynicism, and it was only when his health failed that his hand began to relax its grip. In the scramble for place and power, the grandson of the first Count de Vasselot might easily have gained a prize, but Lory seemed to have no ambition in that direction. Perhaps he had no taste for ministry or bureau, nor cared to cultivate the subtle knowledge of court and cabinet, which meant so much at this time. His tastes were rather those of the camp; and, failing war, he had turned his thoughts to sport. He had hunted in England and fished in Norway. In the winter of 1869 he went to Africa for big game, and, returning in the early weeks of March, found France and his dear Paris gayer, more insouciant, more brilliant than ever.

For the empire had never seemed more secure than it did at this moment, had never stood higher in the eyes of the world, had never boasted so lavish a court. Paris was at her best, and Lory de Vasselot exclaimed aloud, after the manner of his countrymen, at the sight of the young buds and spring flowers around the Lac in the Bois de Boulogne, as he rode there this fresh morning.

He had only arrived in Paris the night before, and, dining at the Cercle Militaire, had accepted the loan of a horse.

‘One will at all events see one’s friends in the wood,’ he said. But, riding there in an ultra-English suit of cords at the fashionable hour, he found that he had somehow missed the fashion. The alleys, which had been popular a year ago, were now deserted; for there is nothing so fickle as social taste, and the riders were all at the other side of the Route de Longchamps.

Lory turned his horse’s head in that direction, and was riding leisurely, when he heard an authoritative voice apparently directed

towards himself. He was in one of the narrow *allées*, 'reserved for cavaliers,' and, turning, perceived that the soft sandy gravel had prevented his hearing the approach of other riders—a man and a woman. And the woman's horse was beyond control. It was a little fiery Arab, leaping high in the air at each stride, and timing a nasty forward jerk of the head at the worst moment for its rider's comfort.

There was no time to do anything but touch his own trained charger with the spur and gallop ahead. He turned in his saddle. The Arab was gaining on him, and gradually leaving behind the heavy horse and weighty rider who were giving chase. The woman, with a set white face, was jerking at the bridle with her left hand in an odd, mechanical, feeble way, while with her right she held to the pommel of her saddle. But she was swaying forward in an unmistakable manner. She was only half conscious, and in a moment must fall.

Lory glanced behind her, and saw a stout-built man, with a fair moustache and a sunburnt face, riding his great horse in the stirrups like a jockey, his face alight with that sudden excitement which sometimes blazes in light blue eyes. He made a quick gesture, which said as plainly as words—

'You must act, and quickly; I can do nothing.'

And the three thundered on. The rides in the Bois de Boulogne are all bordered on either side by thick trees. If Lory de Vasselot pulled across, he would send the maddened Arab into the forest, where the first low branch must of a necessity batter in its rider's head. He rode on, gradually edging across to what in France is the wrong side of the road.

'Hold on, madame; hold on!' he said, in a quick low voice.

But the woman did not seem to hear him. She had dropped the bridle now, and the Arab had thrown it forward over its head.

Then Lory gradually reined in. The woman was reeling in the saddle as the Arab thundered alongside. The wind blew back the long habit, and showed her foot to be firmly in the stirrup.

'Stirrup, madame!' shouted Lory, as if she were miles away. 'Mon Dieu, your stirrup!'

But she only looked ahead with glazed eyes.

Then, edging nearer with a delicate spur, de Vasselot shook off his own right stirrup, and, leaning down, lifted the fainting woman with his right arm clean out of the saddle. He rested

her weight upon his thigh, and, feeling cautiously with his foot, found her stirrup and kicked it free. He pulled up slowly, and, drawing aside, allowed the lady's companion to pass him at a steady gallop after the Arab.

The lady was now in a dead faint, her dark red hair hanging like a rope across de Vasselot's arm. She was, fortunately, not a big woman; for it was no easy position to find one's self in, on the top, thus, of a large horse with a senseless burden and no help in sight. He managed, however, to dismount, and rather breathlessly carried the lady to the shade of the trees, where he laid her with her head on a mound of rising turf, and, lifting aside her hair, saw her face for the first time.

'Ah! That dear baroness!' he exclaimed; and, turning, he found himself bowing rather stiffly to the gentleman, who had now returned, leading the runaway horse. He was not, it may be mentioned, the baron.

While the two men were thus regarding each other in a polite silence, the baroness opened a pair of remarkably bright brown eyes, at first with wonder, and then with understanding, and finally with wonder again when they lighted on de Vasselot.

'Lory!' she cried. 'But where have you fallen from?'

'It must have been from heaven, baroness,' he replied, 'for I assuredly came at the right moment.'

He stood looking down at her—a lithe, neat, rather small-made man. Then he turned to attend to his horse. The baroness was already busy with her hair. She rose to her feet and smoothed her habit.

'Ah, good!' she laughed. 'There is no harm done. But you saved my life, my dear Lory. One cannot have two opinions as to that. If it were not that the colonel is watching us, I should embrace you. But I have not introduced you. This is Colonel Gilbert—my dear and good cousin, Lory de Vasselot. The colonel is from Bastia, by the way, and the Count de Vasselot pretends to be a Corsican. I mention it because it is only friendly to tell you that you have something more than the weather and my gratitude in common.'

She laughed as she spoke; then became suddenly grave, and sat down again with her hand to her eyes.

'And I am going to faint,' she added, with ghastly lips that tried to smile, 'and nobody but you two men.'

'It is the reaction,' said Colonel Gilbert in his soothing way.

But he exchanged a quick glance with de Vasselot. 'It will pass, baroness.'

'It is well to remember at such a moment that one is a sports-woman,' suggested de Vasselot.

'And that one has de Vasselot blood in one's veins, you mean. You may as well say it.' She rose as she spoke, and looked from one to the other with a brave laugh. 'Bring me that horse,' she said.

De Vasselot conveyed by one inimitable gesture that he admired her spirit, but refused to obey her. Colonel Gilbert smiled contemplatively. He was of a different school—of that school of Frenchmen which owes its existence to Napoleon III.—impassive, almost taciturn—more British than the typical Briton. De Vasselot, on the contrary, was quick and vivacious. His fine-cut face and dark eyes expressed a hundred things that his tongue had no time to put into words. He was hard and brown and sun-burnt, which at once made him manly despite his slight frame.

'Ah,' he cried, with a gay laugh, 'that is better. But seriously, you know, you should have a patent stirrup—'

He broke off, described the patent stirrup in three gestures, how it opened and released the foot. He showed the rider falling, the horse galloping away, the released lady-rider rising to her feet and satisfying herself that no bones were broken—all in three more gestures.

'Voilà!' he said; 'I shall send you one.'

'And you as poor—as poor,' said the baroness, whose husband was of the new nobility, which is based, as all the world knows, on solid manufacture. 'My friend, you cannot afford it.'

'I cannot afford to lose *you*,' he said with a sudden gravity, and with eyes which, to the uninitiated, would undoubtedly have conveyed the impression that she was the whole world to him. 'Besides,' he added, as an after-thought, 'it is only sixteen francs.'

The baroness threw up her gay brown eyes.

'Just Heaven!' she exclaimed, 'what it is to be able to inspire such affection—to be valued at sixteen francs!'

Then—for she was as quick and changeable as himself—she turned, and touched his arm with her thickly gloved hand.

'Seriously, my cousin, I cannot thank you, and you, Colonel Gilbert, for your promptness and your skill. And as to my stupid husband, you know, he has no words; when I tell him he will

only grunt behind his great moustache, and he will never thank you, and will never forget. Never! Remember that.' And with a wave of the riding-whip, which was attached to her wrist, she described eternity.

De Vasselot turned with a deprecatory shrug of the shoulders, and busied himself with the girths of his saddle. At the touch and the sight of the buckles his eyes became grave and earnest. And it is not only Frenchmen who cherish this cult of the horse, making false gods of saddle and bridle, and a sacred temple of the harness-room. Very seriously de Vasselot shifted the side-saddle from the Arab to his own large and gentle horse—a wise old charger with a Roman nose, who never wasted his mettle in park tricks, but served honestly the Government that paid his forage.

The Baroness de Mélide watched the transaction in respectful silence, for she too took *le sport* very seriously, and had attended a course of lectures at a riding-school on the art of keeping and using harness. Her colour was now returning—that brilliant, delicate colour which so often accompanies dark red hair—and she gave a little sigh of resignation.

Colonel Gilbert looked at her, but said nothing. He seemed to admire her, in the same contemplative way that he had admired the moon rising behind the island of Capraja from the Place St. Nicholas in Bastia.

De Vasselot noted the sigh, and glanced sharply at her over the shoulder of the big charger.

'Of what are you thinking?' he said.

'Of the millennium, mon ami.'

'The millennium?'

'Yes,' she answered, gathering the bridle; 'when women shall perhaps be allowed to be natural. Our mothers played at being afraid—we play at being courageous.'

As she spoke she placed a neat foot in Colonel Gilbert's hand, who lifted her without effort to the saddle. De Vasselot mounted the Arab, and they rode slowly homewards by way of the Avenue de Longchamps, through the Porte Dauphine, and up that which is now the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, which was quiet enough at this time of day. The baroness was inclined to be silent. She had been more shaken than she cared to confess to two soldiers. Colonel Gilbert probably saw this, for he began to make conversation with de Vasselot.

'You do not come to Corsica,' he said.

'I have never been there—shall never go there,' answered de Vasselot. 'Tell me—is it not a terrible place? The end of the world, I am told. My mother——' he broke off with a gesture of the utmost despair. 'She is dead!' he interpolated—'always told me that it was the most terrible place in the world. At my father's death, more than thirty years ago, she quitted Corsica, and came to live in Paris, where I was born, and where, if God is good, I shall die.'

'My cousin, you talk too much of death,' put in the baroness seriously.

'As between soldiers, baroness,' replied de Vasselot gaily. 'It is our trade. You know the island well, colonel?'

'No, I cannot say that. But I know the Château de Vasselot.'

'Now, that is interesting; and I who scarcely know the address! Near Calvi, is it not? A waste of rocks, and behind each rock at least one bandit—so my dear mother assured me.'

'It might be cultivated,' answered Colonel Gilbert indifferently. 'It might be made to yield a small return. I have often thought so. I have even thought of whiling away my exile by attempting some such scheme. I once contemplated buying a piece of land on that coast to try. Perhaps you would sell?'

'Sell!' laughed de Vasselot. 'No; I am not such a scoundrel as that. I would toss you for it, my dear colonel; I would toss you for it, if you like.'

And as they turned out of the avenue into one of the palatial streets that run towards the Avenue Victor Hugo, he made the gesture of throwing a coin into the air.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE RUE DU CHERCHE-MIDI.

'Il ne faut jamais se laisser trop voir, même à ceux qui nous aiment.'

It was not very definitely known what Mademoiselle Brun taught in the School of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in the Rue du Cherche-Midi in Paris. For it is to be feared that Mademoiselle Brun knew nothing except the world; and it is precisely that form of knowledge which is least cultivated in a convent school.

'She has had a romance,' whispered her bright-eyed charges, and lapsed into suppressed giggles at the mere mention of such a

word in connection with a little woman dressed in rusty black, with thin grey hair, a thin grey face, and a yellow neck.

It would seem, however, that there is a point where even a mother-superior must come down, as it were, into the market-place and meet the world. That point is where the convent purse rattles thinly and the mother-superior must face hunger. It had, in fact, been intimated to the conductors of the School of the Sisterhood of the Sacred Heart by the ladies of the quarter of St. Germain, that the convent teaching taught too little of one world and too much of another. And the mother-superior, being a sensible woman, agreed to engage a certain number of teachers from the outer world. Mademoiselle Brun was vaguely entitled an instructress, while Mademoiselle Denise Lange bore the proud title of mathematical mistress.

Mademoiselle Brun, with her compressed mouth, her wrinkled face, and her cold hazel eyes, accepted the situation, as we have to accept most situations in this world, merely because there is no choice.

‘What can you teach?’ asked the soft-eyed mother-superior.

‘Anything,’ replied Mademoiselle Brun, with a direct gaze, which somehow cowed the nun.

‘She has had a romance,’ whispered some wag of fourteen, when Mademoiselle Brun first appeared in the schoolroom; and that became the accepted legend regarding her.

‘What are you saying of me?’ she asked one day, when her rather sudden appearance caused silence at a moment when silence was not compulsory.

‘That you once had a romance, mademoiselle,’ answered some daring girl.

‘Ah!’

And perhaps the dusky wrinkles lapsed into gentler lines, for some one had the audacity to touch mademoiselle’s hand with a birdlike tap of one finger.

‘And you must tell it to us.’

For there were no nuns present, and mademoiselle was suspected of having a fine contempt for the most stringent of the convent laws.

‘No.’

‘But why not, mademoiselle?’

‘Because the real romances are never told,’ replied Mademoiselle Brun.

But that was only her way, perhaps, of concealing the fact that there was nothing to tell. She spoke in a low voice, for her class shared the long schoolroom this afternoon with the mathematical class. The room did not lend itself to description, for it had bare walls and two long windows looking down disconsolately upon a courtyard, where a grey cat sunned herself in the daytime and bewailed her lot at night. Who, indeed, would be a convent cat?

At the far end of the long room Mademoiselle Denise Lange was superintending, with an earnest face, the studies of five young ladies. It was only necessary to look at the respective heads of the pupils to conclude that these young persons were engaged in mathematical problems, for there is nothing so discomposing to the hair as arithmetic. Mademoiselle Lange herself seemed no more capable of steering a course through a double equation than her pupils, for she was young and pretty, with laughing lips and fair hair, now somewhat ruffled by her calculations. When, however, she looked up, it might have been perceived that her glance was clear and penetrating.

There was no more popular person in the Convent of the Sacred Heart than Denise Lange, and in no walk of life is personal attractiveness so much appreciated as in a girls' school. It is only later in life that *ces demoiselles* begin to find that their neighbour's beauty is but skin deep. The nuns—'fond fools' Mademoiselle Brun called them—concluded that because Denise was pretty she must be good. The girls loved Denise with a wild and exceedingly ephemeral affection, because she was little more than a girl herself, and was, like themselves, liable to moments of deep arithmetical despondency. Mademoiselle Brun admitted that she was fond of Denise because she was her second cousin, and that was all.

When worldly mammas, essentially of the second empire, who perhaps had doubts respecting a purely conventual education, made inquiries on this subject, the mother-superior, feeling very wicked and worldly, usually made mention of the mathematical mistress, Denise Lange, daughter of the great and good general who was killed at Solferino. And no other word of identification was needed. For some keen-witted artist had painted a great salon picture of, not a young paladin, but a fat old soldier, eighteen stone, on his huge charger, with shaking red cheeks and blazing eyes, standing in his stirrups, bursting out of his tight tunic, and roaring to his *enfants* to follow him to their death.

It was after the battle of Solferino that Mademoiselle Brun had come into Denise Lange's life, taking her from her convent school to live in a dull little apartment in the Rue des Saints Pères, educating her, dressing her, caring for her with a grim affection which never wasted itself in words. How she pinched and saved, and taught herself that she might teach others; how she triumphantly made both ends meet,—are secrets which, like Mademoiselle Brun's romance, she would not tell. For French women are not only cleverer and more capable than French men, but they are cleverer and more capable than any other women in the world. History, moreover, will prove this; for nearly all the great women that the world has seen have been produced by France.

Denise and Mademoiselle Brun still lived in the dull little apartment in the Rue des Saints Pères—that narrow street which runs southward from the Quai Voltaire to the Boulevard St. Germain, where the cheap frame-makers, the artists' colourmen, and the dealers in old prints have their shops. To the convent school, the old woman and the young girl, walking daily through the streets to their work, brought with them that breath of worldliness which the advance of civilisation seemed to render desirable to the curriculum of a girls' school.

'It must be heavenly, mademoiselle, to walk in the streets quite alone,' said one of Mademoiselle Brun's pupils to her one day.

'It is,' was the reply; 'especially near the gutter.'

But this afternoon there was no conversation, for the literature class knew that Mademoiselle Brun was in a contrary humour.

'She is looking at that dear Denise with discontented eyes. She is in a shocking temper,' had been the whispered warning from mouth to mouth.

And in truth Mademoiselle Brun constantly glanced down the length of the schoolroom to where Denise was sitting. But a seeing eye could well perceive that it was not with Denise, but with the schoolroom, that the little old woman was discontented. Perhaps she had at times a cruel thought that the Rue des Saints Pères, emphasised as it were by the Rue du Cherche-Midi, was hardly gay for a young life. Perhaps the soft touch of spring that was in the March air stirred up restless longings in the soul of this little grey town-mouse.

And while she was watching Denise, the cross-grained old nun

who acted as concierge to this quiet house came into the room, and handed Denise a long blue envelope.

'It is addressed in a man's handwriting,' she said warningly.

'Then let us by all means send for the tongs,' answered Denise, taking the letter with a mock air of alarm.

But she looked at it curiously, and glanced towards Mademoiselle Brun before she opened it. It was perhaps characteristic of the little old schoolmistress to show no interest whatever. And yet to her it probably seemed an age before Denise came towards her, carrying the letter in her outstretched hand.

'At first,' said the girl, 'I thought it was a joke—a trick of one of the girls. But it is serious enough. It is a romance inside a blue envelope—that is all.'

She gave a joyous laugh, and threw the letter down on Mademoiselle Brun's knees.

'It is my father's cousin, Mattei Perucca, who has died suddenly, and has left me an estate in Corsica,' she continued, impatiently opening the letter, which Mademoiselle Brun fingered with pessimistic distrust. 'See here! that is the address of my estate in Corsica, where I shall invite you to stay with me—I, who stand before you in my old black alpaca, and would borrow a hairpin if you can spare it.'

Her hands were busy with her hair as she spoke; and she seemed to touch life and its entanglements as lightly. Mademoiselle Brun, however, read the letter very gravely. For she was a wise old Frenchwoman, who knew that it is only bad news which may safely be accepted as true.

The letter, which was accompanied by an enclosure, was from a Marseilles solicitor, and began by inquiring as to the identity of Mademoiselle Denise Lange, instructress at the convent school in the Rue du Cherche-Midi, with the daughter of the late General Lange, who met his death on the field of Solferino. It then proceeded to explain that Denise Lange had inherited the property known as the Perucca property, in the commune of Calvi, in the island of Corsica. Followed a schedule of the said property, which included the historic château, known as the Casa Perucca. The solicitor concluded with a word for himself, after the manner of his kind, and clearly demonstrated that no other lawyer was so capable as he to arrange the affairs of Mademoiselle Denise Lange.

'Jean Jacques Moreau,' read Mademoiselle Brun, with some scorn, the signature of the Marseilles notary. 'An imbecile, your

Jean Jacques—an imbecile, like his great and mischievous namesake. He does not say of what malady your second cousin died, or what income the property will yield—if any.’

‘But we can ask him those particulars.’

‘And pay for each answer,’ retorted Mademoiselle Brun, folding the letter reflectively.

She was remembering that a few minutes earlier she had been thinking that their present existence was too narrow for Denise; and now, in the twinkling of an eye, life seemed to be opening out and spreading with a rapidity which only the thoughts of youth could follow and the energy of spring keep pace with.

‘Then we will go to Marseilles and ask the questions ourselves, and then he cannot charge for each answer, for I know he could never keep count.’

But Mademoiselle Brun only looked grave, and would not rise to Denise’s lighter humour. It almost seemed, indeed, as if she were afraid—she who had never known fear through all the years of pinch and struggle, who had faced a world that had no use for her, that would not buy the poor services she had to sell. For to know the worst is always a relief, and to exchange it for something better is like exchanging an old coat for a new one.

‘And in the meantime——’ said Mademoiselle Brun, turning sharply upon her pupils, who had taken the opportunity of abandoning French literature.

‘In the meantime,’ said Denise, turning reluctantly away—‘in the meantime, I am filling a vat of so many cubic metres, from a well so many metres deep, with a pail containing four litres, and of course the pail has a leak in it, and the well becomes deeper as one draws from it, and the Casa Perucca is, I suppose, a dream.’

She went back to her work, and in a few moments was quite absorbed in it. And it was Mademoiselle Brun who could not settle to her French literature, nor compose her thoughts at all. For change is the natural desire of youth, and the belief that it must be for the better, part and parcel of the astounding optimism of that state of life.

A few minutes later Denise remembered the enclosure—a letter in a thick white envelope, which was still lying on her desk. She opened it.

‘**MADMOISELLE**’ (the letter ran),—‘I think I have the pleasure of addressing the daughter of an old comrade-in-arms, and this

must be my excuse for at once approaching my object. I hear by accident that you have inherited from the late Mattei Perucca his small property near Olmeta in Corsica. I knew Mattei Perucca, and the property you inherit is not unknown to one who has had official dealings with landowners in Corsica. I tell you frankly that it would be impossible, in the present disturbed state of the island, for you to live at Olmeta, and I ask you as frankly whether you are disposed to sell me your small estate. I have long cherished the scheme of buying a small parcel of land in Corsica for the purpose of showing the natives that agriculture may be made profitable in so fertile an island, by dint of industry and a firm and unswerving honesty. The Perucca property would suit my purpose. You may be doing a good action in handing over your tenants to one who understands the Corsican nature. I, in addition to relieving the monotony of my present exile at Bastia, may perhaps be inaugurating a happier state of affairs in this most unfortunate country.

‘Awaiting your answer, I am, Mademoiselle,

‘Your obedient servant,

‘LOUIS GILBERT (Colonel).’

The school-bell rang as Denise finished reading the letter. The class was over.

‘We shall descend into the well again to-morrow,’ she said, closing her books.

The girls trooped out into the forlorn courtyard, leaving Mademoiselle Brun and Denise alone in the schoolroom. Mademoiselle Brun read the second letter with a silent concentration. She glanced up when she had finished it.

‘Of course you will sell?’ she said.

Denise was looking out of the tall closed windows at the few yards of sky that were visible above the roofs. Some fleecy clouds were speeding across the clear ether.

‘No,’ she answered slowly; ‘I think I shall go to Corsica. Tell me,’ she added, after a pause—‘I suppose I have Corsican blood in my veins?’

‘I suppose so,’ admitted Mademoiselle Brun reluctantly.

CHAPTER VI.

NEIGHBOURS.

‘Chaque homme a trois caractères : celui qu’il a, celui qu’il montre, et celui qu’il croit avoir.’

By one of the strokes of good fortune which come but once to the most ardent student of fashion, the Baroness de Mélide had taken up horsiness at the very beginning of that estimable craze. It was, therefore, in mere sequence to this pursuit that she fixed her abode on the south side of the Champs-Élysées, and within a stone’s throw of the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, before the world found out that it was quite impossible to live elsewhere. It is so difficult, in truth, to foretell the course of fashion, that one cannot help wondering why the modern soothsayers, who eke out what appears to be a miserable existence in the smaller streets of the Faubourg St. Honoré and in the neighbourhood of Bond Street, do not turn their second sight to the contemplation of the future of streets and districts, instead of telling the curious a number of vague facts respecting their past and vaguer prophecies as to the future.

If, for instance, Cagliostro had foretold that to-day the Chaussée d’Antin would be deserted; that the faubourg would have completely ousted the Rue St. Honoré; that the Avenue de la Grande Armée should be, fashionably speaking, dead after a short and brilliant life; and that the little streets of the Faubourg St. Germain should be all that is most *chic*—what fortunes might have been made! Indeed, no one in a trance or in his right mind can tell to-day why it is right to walk on the right-hand side of the Boulevard des Italiens and the Boulevard des Capucines, and heinously wrong to walk on the left; while, on the contrary, no self-respecting Parisian would allow himself to be seen on the right-hand pavement of the Boulevard de la Madeleine. Indeed, these things are a mystery, and the wise seek only to obey, and not to ask the reason why.

It would be difficult to lay before the English reader the precise social position of the Baroness de Mélide. For there are wheels within wheels, or, more properly perhaps, shades within shades, in the social world of Paris, which are quite unsuspected on this side of the Channel. Indeed, our ignorance of social

France is only surpassed by the French ignorance of social England. The Baroness de Mélide was rich, however, and the rich, as we all know, have nothing to fear in this world. As a matter of fact, Monsieur de Mélide dated his nobility from Napoleon's creation, and Madame's grandfather was of the Emigration. By conviction, they belonged to the Anglophile school, and theirs was one of the prettiest little houses between the Avenue Victor Hugo and the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne, which is more important than ancestors.

It was to this miniature palace that Mademoiselle Brun and Denise were bidden, to the new function of afternoon tea, the day after the receipt of the lawyer's letter. Madame de Mélide would take no denial.

'I have already heard of Denise's good fortune; and from whom do you think?' she wrote. 'From my dear good cousin, Lory de Vasselot, who is, if you will believe it, a Corsican neighbour—the Vasselot and Perucca estates actually adjoin. Both, I need hardly tell you, bristle with bandits, and are quite impossible. But I have quite decided that Lory shall marry Denise. Come, therefore, without fail. I need not tell you to see that Denise looks pretty. The good God has seen to that for you. And as for Lory, he is an angel. I cannot think why I did not marry him myself—except that he did not ask me. And then there is my stupid, whom nobody else would have, and who now sends his dear love to his oldest friend.—Your devoted JANE.'

The Baroness de Mélide was called Jeanne, but she had enthusiastically changed that name for its English version at the period when England was, as it were, first discovered by social France.

When Mademoiselle Brun and Denise arrived, they found the baroness beautifully dressed as usual, and very French, for the empress was at this time the leader of the world's women, as the emperor—that clever *parvenu*—was undoubtedly the first monarch in Europe. It behoves not a masculine pen to attempt a description of Madame de Mélide's costume, which, moreover, was of a bygone mode, and nothing is so unsightly in death as a deceased fashion.

'How good of you to come!' she cried, embracing both ladies in turn, with a fervour which certainly seemed to imply that she had no other friends on earth.

In truth, she had, for the moment, none so dear; for there

are certain warm hearts that are happy in always loving, not the highest, but the nearest.

'Let me see, now,' she added, vigorously dragging forward chairs. 'I asked some one to meet you—some one I particularly wanted you to become acquainted with, but I cannot remember who it is.' As she spoke she consulted a little red morocco betting-book.

'Lory!' she cried, after a short search. 'Yes, of course it was Lory de Vasselot—my cousin. And—will you believe it?—he saved my life the other day, all in a moment! Yes! I saw death, quite close, before my eyes. Ugh! And I, who am so wicked! You do not know what it is to be wicked and to know it, Denise—you who are so young. But that dear Mademoiselle Brun, she knows.'

'Thank you,' said Mademoiselle.

'And Lory saved me, ah! so cleverly. There is no better horseman in the army, they say. Yes; he will certainly come this afternoon, unless there is a race at Longchamps. Now, is there a race, I wonder?'

'For the moment,' said Mademoiselle Brun, very gravely, 'I cannot tell you.'

'She is laughing at me,' cried the baroness, shaking a vivacious forefinger at Mademoiselle Brun. 'But I do not mind; we cannot all be wise—eh?'

'And what a dull world for the rest of us if you were,' said Mademoiselle Brun; and Lory de Vasselot, coming into the room at this moment, was met by her sour smile.

'Ah!' cried the baroness, 'here he is. I present you, my dear Lory, to Mademoiselle Brun, a terrible friend of mine, and to Mademoiselle Lange, who, as you know, has just inherited the other half of Corsica.'

'My congratulations,' answered Lory, shaking hands with Denise in the English fashion. 'An inheritance is so nice when it is quite new.'

'And figure to yourself that this dear child has no notion how it has all come about! She only knows the bare fact that some one is dead, and she has gained—well, a white elephant, one may suppose.'

De Vasselot's quick face suddenly turned grave.

'Ah,' he said, 'then I can tell you how it has all come about. Though I confess at once that I have never been to Corsica, and

have never found myself a halfpenny the richer for owning land there.'

He paused for a moment, and glanced at Mademoiselle Brun.

'Unless,' he interpolated, 'such personal matters will bore mademoiselle.'

'But mademoiselle is the good angel of Mademoiselle Lange, my dear, dull Lory,' explained the baroness; and the object of the elucidation looked at him more keenly than so trifling an incident would seem to warrant.

'You will not be betraying secrets to the first-comer,' she said.

Still de Vasselot seemed to hesitate, as if choosing his words.

'And,' he said at length, 'they shot your cousin's agent in the back, almost in the streets of Olmeta, and Mattei Perucca himself died suddenly, presumably from apoplexy, brought on by a great anger at receiving a letter threatening his life—that is how it has come about, mademoiselle.'

He broke off short, with a quick gesture and a flash of his eyes, usually so pleasant and smiling.

'I have that from a reliable source,' he went on, after a pause, during which Mademoiselle Brun looked steadily at Denise and said nothing.

'Gracious heavens!' exclaimed the baroness, in a whisper; and for once was silenced.

'A faithful correspondent on the island,' explained de Vasselot. 'Though why he is faithful I cannot tell you. Some family legend, perhaps—I cannot tell. It is the Abbé Susini of Olmeta who has told me this. He it was who told me of your—well, I can only call it your misfortune, mademoiselle. For there is assuredly a curse upon Corsica as there is upon Ireland. It cannot govern itself, and no other can govern it. The Napoleons have been the only men to make anything of the island, but a man who is driving a pair of horses down the Champs-Élysées cannot give much thought to his little dog that runs behind. And it is in the Bonaparte blood to drive, not only a pair, but a four-in-hand in the thickest traffic of the world. The Abbé Susini tells me that when the emperor's hand was firm, Corsica was almost orderly, justice was almost administered, banditism was for the moment made to feel the hand of the law, and the authorities could count the number of outlaws evading their grip in the mountains. But since the emperor's illness has taken a dangerous turn things have

gone back again. Corsica is, it seems, a weather-glass by which one may tell the state of the political weather in France; and now it is disturbed, mademoiselle.'

He had become graver as he spoke, and now found himself addressing Denise almost as if she were a man. There is as much difference in listeners as there is in talkers. And Lory de Vasselot, who belonged to the new school of Frenchmen—the open-air, the vigorous, the sportsman-like—found his interlocutor listening with clear eyes fixed frankly on his face. Intelligence betrays itself in listening more than in talking, and de Vasselot, with characteristic and an eminently national intuition, perceived that this girl from a convent school in the Rue du Cherche-Midi was not a person to whom to address drawing-room generalities, and those insults to the feminine comprehension which a bygone generation called compliments.

'But a woman need surely have nothing to fear,' said Denise, who had the habit of carrying her head rather high, and now spoke as if this implied more than a mere trick of deportment.

'A woman! You are not going to Corsica, mademoiselle?'

'But I am,' she answered.

De Vasselot turned thoughtfully, and brought forward a chair. He sat down and gravely contemplated Mademoiselle Brun, whose attitude—upright in a low chair, with crossed hands and a compressed mouth—betrayed nothing. A Frenchman is not nearly so artificial as the shallow British observer has been pleased to conclude. He is, in fact, much more a child of nature than either an Englishman or a German. Lory de Vasselot's expression said as plainly as words to Mademoiselle Brun—

'And what have *you* been about?'

It was so obvious that Mademoiselle Brun, almost imperceptibly, shrugged one shoulder. She was powerless, it appeared.

'But, if you will permit me to say so,' said Lory, sitting down and drawing near to Denise in his earnestness, 'that is impossible. I will not trouble you with details, but it is an impossibility. I understand that Mattei Perucca and his agent were the two strongest men in the northern district, and they only attempted to hold their own, nothing more. With the result that you know.'

'But there are many ways of attempting to hold one's own,' persisted Denise; and she shook her head with a wisdom which only belongs to youth.

De Vasselot spread out his hands in utter despair. The end of the world, it seemed, was at hand. And Denise only laughed.

'And when I have regulated my own affairs, I will undertake the management of your estate at a high salary,' she said.

'There is only one thing to do,' said Lory gravely, 'and I have done it myself. I have abandoned the idea for ever receiving a halfpenny of rent. I have allowed the land to go out of cultivation. The vine-terraces are falling, the olive-trees are dying for want of cultivation. A few peasants graze their cattle in my garden, I understand. The house itself is only saved from falling down by the fact that it is strongly built of stone. I would sell for a mere song, if I could find a serious offer of that trifle; but nobody buys land in Corsica—for the peasants recognise no title-deeds and respect no rights of ownership. I had indeed an offer the other day, but it was undoubtedly a joke, and I treated it as such.'

'Denise also has had an offer to buy the Perucca property,' said Mademoiselle Brun.

'Yes,' said Denise, seeing his surprise. 'And you would advise me to accept it?'

'If it is a serious one, most decidedly.'

'It is serious enough,' answered Denise. 'It is from a Colonel Gilbert, an officer stationed at Bastia.'

'Ah!' he exclaimed; and at that moment another caller entered the room, and he rose with eager politeness.

So it happened that Mademoiselle Brun could not see his face, and was left wondering what the exclamation meant.

Several other callers now appeared—persons of the Baroness de Mélide's own world, who had a hundred society tricks, and bowed or shook hands according to the latest mode. This was not Mademoiselle Brun's world, and she was not interested to hear the latest gossip from that hotbed of scandal, the Tuileries, nor did the ever-changing face of the political world command her attention. She therefore rose, and stiffly took her leave. De Vasselot accompanied them to the hall.

Denise paused in the entrance, and turned to him.

'Seriously,' she said, 'do you advise me to accept this offer to sell Perucca?'

'I scarcely feel authorised to give you any advice upon the subject,' answered Lory reluctantly. 'Though, after all, we are neighbours.'

‘Then——’

‘Then, I should say not, mademoiselle. At all events do nothing in haste. And, if I may ask it, will you communicate with me before you finally decide?’

They had come in an open cab, which was waiting on the shady side of the street.

‘A young man who changes his mind very quickly,’ commented Mademoiselle Brun, as they drove away.

(To be continued.)

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